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PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE

THE WORKS

OF

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE
ZICCI
The Haunted and Haunters

THIRTY VOLUMES: ILLUSTRATED WITH
FORTY FULL-PAGE ENGRAVINGS

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· M C M I ·

13

To

HENRY LYTTON BULWER.

Allow me, my dear Brother, to dedicate this Work to you. The greater part of it (viz., the tales which vary and relieve the voyages of Gertrude and Trevylyan) was written in the pleasant excursions we made together some years ago. Among the associations—some sad and some pleasing—connected with the general design, none are so agreeable to me as those that remind me of the friendship subsisting between us, and which, unlike that of near relations in general, has grown stronger and more intimate as our footsteps have receded farther from the fields where we played together in our childhood. I dedicate this Work to you with the more pleasure, not only when I remember that it has always been a favourite with yourself, but when I think that it is one of my writings most liked in foreign countries; and I may possibly, therefore, have found a record destined to endure the affectionate esteem which this Dedication is intended to convey.

Yours, &c., E. L. B.

London, *April 23, 1840.*

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

Could I prescribe to the critic and to the public, I would wish that this work might be tried by the rules rather of poetry than prose, for according to those rules have been both its conception and its execution;—and I feel that something of sympathy with the author's design is requisite to win indulgence for the superstitions he has incorporated with his tale; for the floridity of his style and the redundance of his descriptions. Perhaps, indeed, it would be impossible, in attempting to paint the scenery and embody some of the Legends of the Rhine, not to give (it may be, too loosely) the reins to the imagination, or to escape the influence of that wild German spirit which I have sought to transfer to a colder tongue.

I have made the experiment of selecting for the main interest of my work the simplest materials, and weaving upon them the ornaments given chiefly to subjects of a more fanciful nature. I know not how far I have succeeded, but various reasons have conspired to make this the work, above all others that I have written, which has given me the most delight (though not unmixed with melancholy) in producing, and in which my mind, for the time, has been the most completely absorbed. But the ardour of composition is often disproportioned to the merit of the work; and the public sometimes, nor unjustly, avenges itself for that forgetfulness of its existence which makes the chief charm of an author's solitude—and the happiest, if not the wisest, inspiration of his dreams.

PREFACE

TO THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE.

With the younger class of my readers this work has had the good fortune to find especial favour; perhaps because it is in itself a collection of the thoughts and sentiments that constitute the Romance of youth. It has little to do with the positive truths of our actual life, and does not pretend to deal with the larger passions and more stirring interests of our kind. It is but an episode out of the graver epic of human destinies. It requires no explanation of its purpose, and no analysis of its story; the one is evident, the other simple:—the first seeks but to illustrate visible nature through the poetry of the affections; the other is but the narrative of the most real of mortal sorrows, which the Author attempts to take out of the region of pain, by various accessories from the Ideal. The connecting tale itself is but the string that binds into a garland the wild flowers cast upon a grave.

The descriptions of the Rhine have been considered by Germans sufficiently faithful to render this tribute to their land and their legends one of the popular guide-books along the course it illustrates—especially to such tourists as wish not only to take in with the eye the inventory of the river, but to seize the peculiar spirit which invests the wave and the bank with a beauty that can only be made visible by reflection. He little comprehends the true charm of the Rhine, who gazes on the vines on the hill-tops without a thought of the imaginary world with which their recesses

have been peopled by the graceful credulity of old; who surveys the steep ruins that overshadow the water, untouched by one lesson from the pensive morality of Time. Everywhere around us is the evidence of perished opinions and departed races—everywhere around us, also, the rejoicing fertility of unconquerable Nature, and the calm progress of Man himself through the infinite cycles of decay. He who would judge adequately of a landscape, must regard it not only with the painter's eye, but with the poet's. The feelings which the sight of any scene in nature conveys to the mind—more especially of any scene on which history or fiction has left its trace—must depend upon our sympathy with those associations which make up what may be called the spiritual character of the spot. If indifferent to those associations, we should see only hedgerows and ploughed land in the battle-field of Bannockburn; and the traveller would but look on a dreary waste, whether he stood amidst the piles of the Druid on Salisbury plain, or trod his bewildered way over the broad expanse on which the Chaldean first learned to number the stars.

To the former editions of this tale was prefixed a poem on "The Ideal," which had all the worst faults of the author's earliest compositions in verse. The present poem (with the exception of a very few lines) has been entirely rewritten, and has at least the comparative merit of being less vague in the thought, and less unpolished in the diction, than that which it replaces.

Ems, 1849.

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THE IDEAL WORLD.

I.

THE IDEAL WORLD — ITS REALM IS EVERYWHERE AROUND US—ITS INHABITANTS ARE THE IMMORTAL PERSONIFICATIONS OF ALL BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS—TO THAT WORLD WE ATTAIN BY THE REPOSE OF THE SENSES.

AROUND "this visible diurnal sphere,"
  There floats a World that girds us like the space;
On wandering clouds and gliding beams career
  Its ever-moving murmurous Populace.
There, all the lovelier thoughts conceived below,
  Ascending live, and in celestial shapes.
To that bright World, O Mortal, wouldst thou go?—
  Bind but thy senses, and thy soul escapes:
To care, to sin, to passion close thine eyes;
Sleep in the flesh, and see the Dreamland rise!
Hark, to the gush of golden waterfalls,
Or knightly tromps at Archimagian Walls!
In the green hush of Dorian Valleys mark
  The River Maid her amber tresses knitting;—
When glow-worms twinkle under coverts dark,
  And silver clouds o'er summer stars are flitting,
With jocund elves invade "the Moone's sphere,
Or hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear;"[1]
Or, list! what time the roseate urns of dawn
  Scatter fresh dews, and the first skylark weaves
Joy into song—the blithe Arcadian Faun
  Piping to wood-nymphs under Bromian leaves,

[1] "Midsummer Night's Dream."

While slowly gleaming through the purple glade
Come Evian's panther car, and the pale Naxian Maid.

Such, O Ideal World, thy habitants!
  All the fair children of creative creeds—
All the lost tribes of Phantasy are thine—
From antique Saturn in Dodonian haunts,
  Or Pan's first music waked from shepherd reeds,
To the last sprite when Heaven's pale lamps decline,
Heard wailing soft along the solemn Rhine.

II.

OUR DREAMS BELONG TO THE IDEAL—THE DIVINER LOVE FOR WHICH YOUTH SIGHS NOT ATTAINABLE IN LIFE—BUT THE PURSUIT OF THAT LOVE BEYOND THE WORLD OF THE SENSES PURIFIES THE SOUL AND AWAKES THE GENIUS—PETRARCH—DANTE.

Thine are the Dreams that pass the Ivory Gates,
  With prophet shadows haunting poet eyes!
Thine the beloved illusions youth creates
  From the dim haze of its own happy skies.
In vain we pine—we yearn on earth to win
  The being of the heart, our boyhood's dream.
The Psyche and the Eros ne'er have been,
  Save in Olympus, wedded!—As a stream
Glasses a star, so life the ideal love;
Restless the stream below—serene the orb above!
Ever the soul the senses shall deceive;
Here custom chill, their kinder fate bereave:
For mortal lips unmeet eternal vows!
And Eden's flowers for Adam's mournful brows!
We seek to make the moment's angel guest
  The household dweller at a human hearth;
We chase the bird of Paradise, whose nest
  Was never found amid the bowers of earth.[1]

[1] According to a belief in the East, which is associated with one of the loveliest and most familiar of Oriental superstitions, the bird

Yet loftier joys the vain pursuit may bring,
  Than sate the senses with the boons of time;
The bird of Heaven hath still an upward wing,
  The steps it lures are still the steps that climb,
And in the ascent altho' the soil be bare,
More clear the daylight and more pure the air.
Let Petrarch's heart the human mistress lose,
He mourns the Laura but to win the Muse.
Could all the charms which Georgian maids combine
Delight the soul of the dark Florentine,
Like one chaste dream of childlike Beatrice
Awaiting Hell's dark pilgrim in the skies,
Snatched from below to be the guide above,
And clothe Religion in the form of Love?[1]

III.

GENIUS, LIFTING ITS LIFE TO THE IDEAL, BECOMES ITSELF A PURE IDEA—IT MUST COMPREHEND ALL EXISTENCE: ALL HUMAN SINS AND SUFFERINGS—BUT IN COMPREHENDING, IT TRANSMUTES THEM—THE POET IN HIS TWOFOLD BEING—THE ACTUAL AND THE IDEAL—THE INFLUENCE OF GENIUS OVER THE STERNEST REALITIES OF EARTH—OVER OUR PASSIONS—WARS AND SUPERSTITIONS—ITS IDENTITY IS WITH HUMAN PROGRESS—ITS AGENCY, EVEN WHERE UNACKNOWLEDGED, IS UNIVERSAL.

Oh, thou true Iris! sporting on thy bow
  Of tears and smiles—Jove's herald, Poetry,
Thou reflex image of all joy and woe—
  Both fused in light by thy dear phantasy!
Lo! from the clay how Genius lifts its life,
  And grows one pure Idea—one calm soul!
True, its own clearness must reflect our strife;
  True, its completeness must comprise our whole:

of Paradise is never seen to rest upon the earth—and its nest is never to be found.

[1] It is supposed by many of the commentators on Dante, that in the form of his lost Beatrice, who guides him in his Vision of Heaven, he allegorises Religious Faith.

But as the sun transmutes the sullen hues
  Of marsh-grown vapours into vermeil dyes,
And melts them later into twilight dews,
  Shedding on flowers the baptism of the skies;
So glows the Ideal in the air we breathe—
  So from the fumes of sorrow and of sin,
Doth its warm light in rosy colours wreathe
  Its playful cloudland, storing balms within.

Survey the Poet in his mortal mould
  Man, amongst men, descended from his throne!
The moth that chased the star now frets the fold,
  Our cares, our faults, our follies are his own.
Passions as idle, and desires as vain,
Vex the wild heart, and dupe the erring brain.
From Freedom's field the recreant Horace flies
To kiss the hand by which his country dies;
From Mary's grave the mighty Peasant turns,
And hoarse with orgies rings the laugh of Burns.
While Rousseau's lips a lackey's vices own,—
Lips that could draw the thunder on a throne!
But when from Life the Actual Genius springs,
  When, self-transform'd by its own magic rod,
It snaps the fetters and expands the wings,
  And drops the fleshly garb that veil'd the god,
How the mists vanish as the form ascends!—
How in its aureole every sunbeam blends!
By the Arch-Brightener of Creation seen,
  How dim the crowns on perishable brows!
The snows of Atlas melt beneath the sheen,
  Thro' Thebaid caves the rushing splendour flows.
Cimmerian glooms with Asian beams are bright,
And Earth reposes in a belt of light.
Now stern as Vengeance shines the awful form,
Arm'd with the bolt and glowing thro' the storm;
Sets the great deeps of human passion free,
And whelms the bulwarks that would breast the sea.

Roused by its voice the ghastly Wars arise,
Mars reddens earth, the Valkyrs pale the skies;
Dim Superstition from her hell escapes,
With all her shadowy brood of monster shapes;
Here life itself the scowl of Typhon[1] takes;
There Conscience shudders at Alecto's snakes;
From Gothic graves at midnight yawning wide,
In gory cerements gibbering spectres glide;
And where o'er blasted heaths the lightnings flame,
Black secret hags "do deeds without a name!"
Yet thro' its direst agencies of awe,
Light marks its presence and pervades its law,
And, like Orion when the storms are loud,
It links creation while it gilds a cloud.
By ruthless Thor, free Thought, frank Honour stand,
Fame's grand desire, and zeal for Fatherland.
The grim Religion of Barbarian Fear,
With some Hereafter still connects the Here,
Lifts the gross sense to some spiritual source,
And thrones some Jove above the Titan Force,
Till, love completing what in awe began,
From the rude savage dawns the thoughtful man.

Then, O behold the Glorious Comforter!
  Still bright'ning worlds but gladd'ning now the hearth,
Or like the lustre of our nearest star,
  Fused in the common atmosphere of earth.
It sports like hope upon the captive's chain;
Descends in dreams upon the couch of pain;
To wonder's realm allures the earnest child;
To the chaste love refines the instinct wild;
And as in waters the reflected beam,
Still where we turn, glides with us up the stream;

[1] The gloomy Typhon of Egypt assumes many of the mystic attributes of the Principle of Life which, in the Grecian Apotheosis of the Indian Bacchus, is represented in so genial a character of exuberant joy and everlasting youth.

And while in truth the whole expanse is bright,
Yields to each eye its own fond path of light,
So over life the rays of Genius fall,
Give each his track because illuming all.

IV.

FORGIVENESS TO THE ERRORS OF OUR BENEFACTORS

Hence is that secret pardon we bestow
  In the true instinct of the grateful heart,
Upon the Sons of Song. The good they do
  In the clear world of their Uranian art
Endures for ever; while the evil done
  In the poor drama of their mortal scene,
Is but a passing cloud before the sun;
  Space hath no record where the mist hath been.
Boots it to us if Shakespeare err'd like man?
  Why idly question that most mystic life?
Eno' the giver in his gifts to scan;
  To bless the sheaves with which thy fields are rife,
Nor, blundering, guess thro' what obstructive clay
The glorious corn-seed struggled up to day.

V.

THE IDEAL IS NOT CONFINED TO POETS—ALGERNON SIDNEY RECOGNISES HIS IDEAL IN LIBERTY, AND BELIEVES IN ITS TRIUMPH WHERE THE MERE PRACTICAL MAN COULD BEHOLD BUT ITS RUINS—YET LIBERTY IN THIS WORLD MUST EVER BE AN IDEAL, AND THE LAND THAT IT PROMISES CAN BE FOUND BUT IN DEATH.

But not to you alone, O Sons of Song,
The wings that float the loftier airs along.
Whoever lifts us from the dust we are,
  Beyond the sensual to spiritual goals;
Who from the MOMENT and the SELF afar
  By deathless deeds allures reluctant souls,

Gives the warm life to what the Limner draws,
Plato but thought what godlike Cato was.[1]
Recall the Wars of England's giant-born,
  Is Elyot's voice—is Hampden's death in vain?
Have all the meteors of the vernal morn
  But wasted light upon a frozen main?
Where is that child of Carnage, Freedom, flown?
The Sybarite lolls upon the martyr's throne.
Lewd, ribald jests succeed to solemn zeal;
And things of silk to Cromwell's men of steel.
Cold are the hosts the tromps of Ireton thrill'd,
And hush'd the senates Vane's large presence fill'd.
In what strong heart doth the old manhood dwell?
Where art thou, Freedom?—Look—in Sidney's cell!
There still as stately stands the living Truth,
Smiling on age as it had smiled on youth.
Her forts dismantled, and her shrines o'erthrown,
The headsman's block her last dread altar-stone,
No sanction left to Reason's vulgar hope—
Far from the wrecks expands her prophet's scope.
Millennial morns the tombs of Kedron gild,
The hands of saints the glorious walls rebuild,—
Till each foundation garnished with its gem,
High o'er Gehenna flames Jerusalem!
O thou blood-stained Ideal of the free,
Whose breath is heard in clarions—Liberty!
Sublimer for thy grand illusions past,
Thou spring'st to Heaven—Religion at the last.
Alike below, or commonwealths, or thrones,
Where'er men gather some crush'd victim groans;
Only in death thy real form we see,
All life is bondage—souls alone are free.
Thus through the waste the wandering Hebrews went,
Fire on the march, but cloud upon the tent.
At last on Pisgah see the prophet stand,
Before his vision spreads the PROMISED LAND;

[1] "What Plato thought, and godlike Cato was."—POPE.

But where reveal'd the Canaan to his eye?—
Upon the mountain he ascends to die.

VI.

YET ALL HAVE TWO ESCAPES INTO THE IDEAL WORLD—VIZ., MEMORY AND HOPE—EXAMPLE OF HOPE IN YOUTH, HOWEVER EXCLUDED FROM ACTION AND DESIRE—NAPOLEON'S SON.

Yet whatsoever be our bondage here,
All have two portals to the phantom sphere,—
What hath not glided through those gates that ope
Beyond the Hour, to MEMORY or to HOPE!
Give Youth the Garden,—still it soars above—
Seeks some far glory—some diviner love.
Place Age amidst the Golgotha—its eyes
Still quit the graves, to rest upon the skies;
And while the dust, unheeded, moulders there,
Track some lost angel through cerulean air.

Lo! where the Austrian binds, with formal chain,
The crownless son of earth's last Charlemain—
Him, at whose birth laugh'd all the violet vales
(While yet unfallen stood thy sovereign star,
O Lucifer of nations)—hark, the gales
Swell with the shout from all the hosts, whose war
Rended the Alps, and crimson'd Memphian Nile—
"Way for the coming of the Conqueror's Son:
Woe to the Merchant-Carthage of the Isle!
Woe to the Scythian Ice-world of the Don!
O Thunder Lord, thy Lemnian bolts prepare,
The Eagle's eyrie hath its eagle heir!"
Hark, at that shout from north to south, grey Power
Quails on its weak, hereditary thrones;
And widowed mothers prophesy the hour
Of future carnage to their cradled sons.
What! shall our race to blood be thus consign'd,
And Até claim an heirloom in mankind?

Are these red lots unshaken in the urn?
Years pass—approach, pale Questioner—and learn
Chain'd to his rock, with brows that vainly frown,
The fallen Titan sinks in darkness down!
And sadly gazing through his gilded grate,
Behold the child whose birth was as a fate!
Far from the land in which his life began;
Wall'd from the healthful air of hardy man;
Rear'd by cold hearts, and watch'd by jealous eyes,
His guardians gaolers, and his comrades spies.
Each trite convention courtly fears inspire
To stint experience and to dwarf desire;
Narrows the action to a puppet stage,
And trains the eaglet to the starling's cage.
On the dejected brow and smileless cheek,
What weary thought the languid lines bespeak:
Till drop by drop, from jaded day to day,
The sickly life-streams ooze themselves away.
  Yet oft in Hope a boundless realm was thine,
That vaguest Infinite—the Dream of Fame;
  Son of the sword that first made kings divine,
  Heir to man's grandest royalty—a Name!
Then didst thou burst upon the startled world,
  And keep the glorious promise of thy birth;
Then were the wings that bear the bolt unfurl'd,
  A monarch's voice cried, "Place upon the earth!"
A new Philippi gain'd a second Rome,
And the Son's sword avenged the greater Cæsar's doom.

VII.

EXAMPLE OF MEMORY AS LEADING TO THE IDEAL — AMIDST LIFE HOWEVER HUMBLE, AND IN A MIND HOWEVER IGNORANT—THE VILLAGE WIDOW.

But turn the eye to life's sequester'd vale
  And lowly roofs remote in hamlets green,

Oft in my boyhood where the moss-grown pale
  Fenced quiet graves, a female form was seen;
Each eve she sought the melancholy ground,
And lingering paused, and wistful look'd around
If yet some footstep rustled thro' the grass,
Timorous she shrunk, and watch'd the shadow pass.
Then, when the spot lay lone amidst the gloom,
Crept to one grave too humble for a tomb,
There silent bowed her face above the dead,
For, if in prayer, the prayer was inly said;
Still as the moonbeam, paused her quiet shade,
Still as the moonbeam, thro' the yews to fade.
Whose dust thus hallowed by so fond a care?
What the grave saith not—let the heart declare.
  On yonder green two orphan children play'd;
By yonder rill two plighted lovers stray'd.
In yonder shrine two lives were blent in one,
And joy-bells chimed beneath a summer sun.
Poor was their lot—their bread in labor found;
No parent bless'd them, and no kindred own'd;
They smiled to hear the wise their choice condemn;
They loved—they loved—and love was wealth to them!
Hark—one short week—again the holy bell!
Still shone the sun; but dirge-like boom'd the knell.
The icy hand had severed breast from breast;
Left life to toil, and summon'd Death to rest.
Full fifty years since then have passed away,
Her cheek is furrow'd, and her hair is grey.
Yet, when she speaks of *him* (the times are rare),
Hear in her voice how youth still trembles there.
The very name of that young life that died
Still heaves the bosom, and recalls the bride.
Lone o'er the widow's hearth those years have fled,
The daily toil still wins the daily bread;
No books deck sorrow with fantastic dyes:
Her fond romance her woman heart supplies;
And, haply in the few still moments given,

(Day's taskwork done),—to memory, death, and heaven,
To that unutter'd poem may belong
Thoughts of such pathos as had beggar'd song.

VIII.

HENCE IN HOPE, MEMORY, AND PRAYER, ALL OF US ARE POETS.

Yes, while thou hopest, music fills the air,
  While thou rememberest, life reclothes the clod;
While thou canst feel the electric chain of prayer,
  Breathe but a thought, and be a soul with God!
Let not these forms of matter bound thine eye,
  He who the vanishing point of Human things
Lifts from the landscape—lost amidst the sky,
  Has found the Ideal which the poet sings—
Has pierced the pall around the senses thrown,
And is himself a poet—tho' unknown.

IX.

APPLICATION OF THE POEM TO THE TALE TO WHICH IT IS PREFIXED—THE RHINE—ITS IDEAL CHARACTER IN ITS HISTORICAL AND LEGENDARY ASSOCIATIONS.

Eno'!—my song is closing, and to thee,
  Land of the North, I dedicate its lay;
As I have done the simple tale to be
  The dream of this prelude!—
                Far away
Rolls the swift Rhine beneath the starry ray;
But to my ear its haunted waters sigh;
Its moonlight mountains glimmer on my eye;
On wave, on marge, as on a wizard's glass,
Imperial ghosts in dim procession pass;
Lords of the wild—the first great Father-men,
Their fane the hill-top—and their home the glen;

Frowning they fade—a bridge of steel appears
With frank-eyed Cæsar smiling thro' the spears;
The march moves onwards, and the mirror brings
The Gothic crowns of Carlovingian kings:
Vanish'd alike! The Hermit rears his Cross,
And barbs neigh shrill, and plumes in tumult toss,
While (knighthood's sole sweet conquest from the Moor)
Sings to Arabian lutes the Troubadour.
  Not yet, not yet—still glide some lingering shades—
Still breathe some murmurs as the starlight fades—
Still from her rock I hear the Siren call,
And see the tender ghost in Roland's mouldering hall!

X.

APPLICATION OF THE POEM CONTINUED—THE IDEAL LENDS ITS AID TO THE MOST FAMILIAR AND THE MOST ACTUAL SORROW OF LIFE—FICTION COMPARED TO SLEEP—IT STRENGTHENS WHILE IT SOOTHES.

Trite were the tale I tell of love and doom,
(Whose life hath loved not, whose not mourn'd a tomb?)
But fiction draws a poetry from grief,
As art its healing from the wither'd leaf.
Play thou, sweet Fancy, round the sombre truth,
  Crown the sad Genius ere it lower the torch!
When death the altar and the victim youth,
  Flutes fill the air, and garlands deck the porch.
As down the river drifts the Pilgrim sail,
Clothe the rude hill-tops, lull the Northern gale;
With child-like lore the fatal course beguile,
And brighten death with Love's untiring smile,
Along the banks let fairy forms be seen
"By fountain clear, or spangled starlike sheen."[1]
Let sound and shape to which the sense is dull,
Haunt the soul opening on the Beautiful.

[1] "Midsummer Night's Dream."

And when at length, the symbol voyage done,—
Surviving Grief shrinks lonely from the sun,
By tender types show Grief what memories bloom
From lost delight—what fairies guard the tomb.
Scorn not the dream, O world-worn,—pause a while,
New strength shall nerve thee as the dreams beguile,
Stung by the rest—less far shall seem the goal!
As sleep to life, so fiction to the soul.

THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO QUEEN NYMPHALIN.

In one of those green woods which belong so peculiarly to our island (for the Continent has its forests, but England its woods) there lived, a short time ago, a charming little fairy called Nymphalin. I believe she is descended from a younger branch of the house of Mab, but perhaps that may only be a genealogical fable, for your fairies are very susceptible to the pride of ancestry, and it is impossible to deny that they fall somewhat reluctantly into the liberal opinions so much in vogue at the present day.

However that may be, it is quite certain that all the courtiers in Nymphalin's domain (for she was a queen fairy) made a point of asserting her right to this illustrious descent; and accordingly she quartered the Mab arms with her own—three acorns vert, with a grasshopper rampant. It was as merry a little court as could possibly be conceived, and on a fine midsummer night it would have been worth while attending the queen's balls—that is to say, if you could have got a ticket; a favour not obtained without great interest.

But, unhappily, until both men and fairies adopt Mr. Owen's proposition, and live in parallelograms, they will always be the victims of *ennui*. And Nymphalin, who had been disappointed in love, and was still unmarried, had for the last five or six months been exceedingly tired even of giving balls. She yawned very frequently, and consequently yawning became a fashion.

"But why don't we have some new dances, my Pipalee?" said Nymphalin to her favourite maid of honour; "these waltzes are very old-fashioned."

"Very old-fashioned," said Pipalee.

The queen gaped, and Pipalee did the same.

It was a gala night; the court was held in a lone and beautiful hollow, with the wild brake closing round it on every side, so that no human step could easily gain the spot. Wherever the shadows fell upon the brake a glow-worm made a point of exhibiting itself, and the bright August moon sailed slowly above, pleased to look down upon so charming a scene of merriment; for they wrong the moon who assert that she has an objection to mirth;—with the mirth of fairies she has all possible sympathy. Here and there in the thicket the scarce honeysuckles—in August honeysuckles are somewhat out of season—hung their rich festoons, and at that moment they were crowded with the elderly fairies, who had given up dancing and taken to scandal. Besides the honeysuckles you might see the hawkweed and the white convolvulus, varying the soft verdure of the thicket; and mushrooms in abundance had sprung up in the circle, glittering in the silver moonlight, and acceptable beyond measure to the dancers: every one knows how agreeable a thing tents are in a *fête champêtre!* I was mistaken in saying that the brake closed the circle *entirely* round; for there was one gap, scarcely apparent to mortals, through which a fairy at least might catch a view of a brook that was close at hand, rippling in the stars, and chequered at intervals by the rich weeds floating on the surface, interspersed with the delicate arrowhead and the silver water-lily. Then the trees themselves, in their prodigal variety of hues; the blue, the purple, the yellowing tint—the tender and silvery verdure, and the deep mass of shade frowning into black; the willow, the elm, the ash, the fir, and the lime, "and, best of all, Old England's haunted oak:" these hues were broken again into a thousand minor and subtler shades as the twinkling stars pierced

the foliage, or the moon slept with a richer light upon some favoured glade.

It was a gala night; the elderly fairies, as I said before, were chatting among the honeysuckles; the young were flirting, and dancing, and making love; the middle-aged talked politics under the mushrooms; and the queen herself and half-a-dozen of her favourites were yawning their pleasure from a little mound covered with the thickest moss.

"It has been very dull, madam, ever since Prince Fayzenheim left us," said the fairy Nip.

The queen sighed.

"How handsome the prince is!" said Pipalee.

The queen blushed.

"He wore the prettiest dress in the world; and what a moustache!" cried Pipalee, fanning herself with her left wing.

"He was a coxcomb," said the lord treasurer, sourly. The lord treasurer was the honestest and most disagreeable fairy at court; he was an admirable husband, brother, son, cousin, uncle, and godfather; it was these virtues that made him a lord treasurer. Unfortunately they had not made him a sensible fairy. He was like Charles the Second in one respect, for he never did a wise thing; but he was not like him in another—for he very often said a foolish one.

The queen frowned.

"A young prince is not the worse for that," retorted Pipalee. "Heigho! does your majesty think his highness likely to return?"

"Don't tease me," said Nymphalin, pettishly.

The lord treasurer, by way of giving the conversation an agreeable turn, reminded her majesty that there was a prodigious accumulation of business to see to, especially that difficult affair about the emmet-wasp loan. Her majesty rose, and leaning on Pipalee's arm, walked down to the supper tent.

"Pray," said the fairy Trip to the fairy Nip, "what is

all this talk about Prince Fayzenheim? Excuse my ignorance; I am only just out, you know."

"Why," answered Nip, a young courtier, not a marrying fairy, but very seductive, "the story runs thus: Last summer a foreigner visited us, calling himself Prince Fayzenheim: one of your German fairies, I fancy; no great things, but an excellent waltzer. He wore long spurs, made out of the stings of the horse-flies in the Black Forest; his cap sat on one side, and his moustachios curled like the lip of the dragon-flower. He was on his travels, and amused himself by making love to the queen. You can't fancy, dear Trip, how fond she was of hearing him tell stories about the strange creatures of Germany—about wild huntsmen, water-sprites, and a pack of such stuff," added Nip, contemptuously, for Nip was a freethinker.

"In short?" said Trip.

"In short, she loved," cried Nip, with a theatrical air.

"And the prince?"

"Packed up his clothes, and sent on his travelling-carriage, in order that he might go at his ease on the top of a stage-pigeon; in short—as you say—in short, he deserted the queen, and ever since she has set the fashion of yawning."

"It was very naughty in him," said the gentle Trip.

"Ah, my dear creature," cried Nip, "if it had been *you* to whom he had paid his addresses!"

Trip simpered, and the old fairies from their seats in the honeysuckles observed she was "sadly conducted;" but the Trips had never been *too* respectable.

Meanwhile the queen, leaning on Pipalee, said, after a short pause, "Do you know I have formed a plan!"

"How delightful!" cried Pipalee. "Another gala!"

"Pooh, surely even you must be tired with such levities: the spirit of the age is no longer frivolous; and I dare say, as the march of gravity proceeds, we shall get rid of galas altogether." The queen said this with an air of inconceivable wisdom, for the "Society for the Diffusion of General

Stupefaction" had been recently established among the fairies, and its tracts had driven all the light reading out of the market. *The Penny Proser* had contributed greatly to the increase of knowledge and yawning, so visibly progressive among the courtiers.

"No," continued Nymphalin; "I have thought of something better than galas. Let us travel!"

Pipalee clasped her hands in ecstasy.

"Where shall we travel?"

"Let us go up the Rhine," said the queen, turning away her head. "We shall be amazingly welcomed; there are fairies without number all the way by its banks, and various distant connections of ours whose nature and properties will afford interest and instruction to a philosophical mind."

"Number Nip, for instance," cried the gay Pipalee.

"The Red Man!" said the graver Nymphalin.

"Oh, my queen, what an excellent scheme!" and Pipalee was so lively during the rest of the night that the old fairies in the honeysuckle insinuated that the lady of honour had drunk a buttercup too much of the Maydew.

CHAPTER II.

THE LOVERS.

I WISH only for such readers as give themselves heart and soul up to me—if they begin to cavil I have done with them; their fancy should put itself entirely under my management; and, after all, ought they not to be too glad to get out of this hackneyed and melancholy world, to be run away with by an author who promises them something new?

From the heights of Bruges, a Mortal and his betrothed gazed upon the scene below. They saw the sun set slowly amongst purple masses of cloud, and the lover turned to his mistress and sighed deeply; for her cheek was delicate

in its blended roses, beyond the beauty that belongs to the hues of health; and when he saw the sun sinking from the world, the thought came upon him, that *she* was his sun, and the glory that she shed over his life might soon pass away into the bosom of the "ever-during Dark." But against the clouds rose one of the many spires that characterise the town of Bruges; and on that spire, tapering into heaven, rested the eyes of Gertrude Vane. The different object that caught the gaze of each was emblematic both of the different channel of their thoughts and the different elements of their nature: he thought of the sorrow, she of the consolation: his heart prophesied of the passing away from earth—hers of the ascension into heaven. The lower part of the landscape was wrapt in shade; but, just where the bank curved round in a mimic bay, the waters caught the sun's parting smile, and rippled against the herbage that clothed the shore, with a scarcely noticeable wave. There are two of the numerous mills which are so picturesque a feature of that country, standing at a distance from each other on the rising banks, their sails perfectly still in the cool silence of the evening, and adding to the rustic tranquillity which breathed around. For to me there is something in the still sails of one of those inventions of man's industry peculiarly eloquent of repose: the rest seems typical of the repose of our own passions—short and uncertain, contrary to their natural ordination; and doubly impressive from the feeling which admonishes us how precarious is the stillness—how utterly dependent on every wind rising at any moment and from any quarter of the heavens! They saw before them no living forms, save of one or two peasants yet lingering by the water-side.

Trevylyan drew closer to his Gertrude; for his love was inexpressibly tender, and his vigilant anxiety for her made his stern frame feel the first coolness of the evening even before she felt it herself.

"Dearest, let me draw your mantle closer round you."

Gertrude smiled her thanks.

"I feel better than I have done for weeks," said she; "and when once we get into the Rhine, you will see me grow so strong as to shock all your interest for me."

"Ah, would to Heaven my interest for you may be put to such an ordeal!" said Trevylyan; and they turned slowly to the inn, where Gertrude's father already awaited them.

Trevylyan was of a wild, a resolute, and an active nature. Thrown on the world at the age of sixteen, he had passed his youth in alternate pleasure, travel, and solitary study. At the age in which manhood is least susceptible to caprice, and most perhaps to passion, he fell in love with the loveliest person that ever dawned upon a poet's vision. I say this without exaggeration, for Gertrude Vane's was indeed the beauty, but the perishable beauty, of a dream. It happened most singularly to Trevylyan (but he was a singular man), that being naturally one whose affections it was very difficult to excite, he should have fallen in love at first sight with a person whose disease, already declared, would have deterred any other heart from risking its treasures on a bark so utterly unfitted for the voyage of life. Consumption, but consumption in its most beautiful shape, had set its seal upon Gertrude Vane, when Trevylyan first saw her, and at once loved. He knew the danger of the disease; he did not, except at intervals, deceive himself; he wrestled against the new passion: but, stern as his nature was, he could not conquer it. He loved, he confessed his love, and Gertrude returned it.

In a love like this, there is something ineffably beautiful—it is essentially the poetry of passion. Desire grows hallowed by fear, and, scarce permitted to indulge its vent in the common channel of the senses, breaks forth into those vague yearnings—those lofty aspirations, which pine for the Bright, the Far, the Unattained. It is "the desire of the moth for the star"—it is the love of the soul!

Gertrude was advised by the faculty to try a southern climate; but Gertrude was the daughter of a German mother, and her young fancy had been nursed in all the

wild legends and the alluring visions that belong to the children of the Rhine. Her imagination, more romantic than classic, yearned for the vine-clad hills and haunted forests which are so fertile in their spells to those who have once drunk, even sparingly, of the Literature of the North. Her desire strongly expressed—her declared conviction that if any change of scene could yet arrest the progress of her malady it would be the shores of the river she had so longed to visit, prevailed with her physicians and her father, and they consented to that pilgrimage along the Rhine on which Gertrude, her father, and her lover were now bound.

It was by the green curve of the banks which the lovers saw from the heights of Bruges, that our fairy travellers met. They were reclining on the water-side, playing at dominoes with eyebright and the black specks of the trefoil;—viz., Pipalee, Nip, Trip, and the lord treasurer (for that was all the party selected by the queen for her travelling *cortége*), and waiting for her majesty, who, being a curious little elf, had gone round the town to reconnoitre.

"Bless me!" said the lord treasurer; "what a mad freak is this! Crossing that immense pond of water! And was there ever such bad grass as this?—one may see that the fairies thrive ill here."

"You are always discontented, my lord," said Pipalee; "but then you are somewhat too old to travel;—at least, unless you go in your nutshell and four."

The lord treasurer did not like this remark, so he muttered a peevish pshaw, and took a pinch of honeysuckle dust to console himself for being forced to put up with so much frivolity.

At this moment, ere the moon was yet at her middest height, Nymphalin joined her subjects.

"I have just returned," said she, with a melancholy expression on her countenance, "from a scene that has almost renewed in me that sympathy with human beings which of late years our race has well-nigh relinquished.

"I hurried through the town without noticing much food

for adventure. I paused for a moment on a fat citizen's pillow, and bade him dream of love. He woke in a fright, and ran down to see that his cheeses were safe. I swept with a light wing over a politician's eyes, and straightway he dreamed of theatres and music. I caught an undertaker in his first nap, and I have left him whirled into a waltz. For what would be sleep if it did not contrast life? Then I came to a solitary chamber, in which a girl, in her tenderest youth, knelt by the bedside in prayer, and I saw that the death-spirit had passed over her, and the blight was on the leaves of the rose. The room was still and hushed—the angel of Purity kept watch there. Her heart was full of love, and yet of holy thoughts, and I bade her dream of the long life denied to her—of a happy home—of the kisses of her young lover—of eternal faith, and unwaning tenderness. Let her at least enjoy in dreams what Fate has refused to Truth! And, passing from the room, I found her lover stretched in his cloak beside the door; for he reads with a feverish and desperate prophecy the doom that waits her; and so loves he the very air she breathes, the very ground she treads, that when she has left his sight he creeps, silently and unknown to her, to the nearest spot hallowed by her presence, anxious that while yet she is on earth not an hour, not a moment, should be wasted upon other thoughts than those that belong to her; and feeling a security, a fearful joy, in lessening the distance that *now* only momentarily divides them. And that love seemed to me not as the love of the common world, and I stayed my wings and looked upon it as a thing that centuries might pass and bring no parallel to, in its beauty and its melancholy truth. But I kept away the sleep from the lover's eyes, for well I knew that sleep was a tyrant, that shortened the brief time of waking tenderness for the living, yet spared him; and one sad, anxious thought of her was sweeter, in spite of its sorrow, than the brightest of fairy dreams. So I left him awake, and watching there through the long night, and felt that the children of earth

have still something that unites them to the spirits of a finer race, so long as they retain amongst them the presence of real love!"

And oh! is there not a truth also in our fictions of the Unseen World? Are there not yet bright lingerers by the forest and the stream? Do the moon and the soft stars look out on no delicate and winged forms bathing in their light? Are the fairies and the invisible hosts but the children of our dreams; and not their inspiration? Is that all a delusion which speaks from the golden page? And is the world only given to harsh and anxious travellers that walk to and fro in pursuit of no gentle shadows? Are the chimeras of the passions the sole spirits of the universe? No! while my remembrance treasures in its deepest cell the image of one no more—one who was "not of the earth, earthly"—one in whom love was the essence of thoughts divine—one whose shape and mould, whose heart and genius, would, had Poesy never before dreamed it, have called forth the first notion of spirits resembling mortals, but not of them;—no, Gertrude! while I remember you, the faith, the trust in brighter shapes and fairer natures than the world knows of, comes clinging to my heart; and still will I think that Fairies might have watched over your sleep and Spirits have ministered to your dreams.

CHAPTER III.

FEELINGS.

Gertrude and her companions proceeded by slow and, to her, delightful stages to Rotterdam. Trevylyan sat by her side, and her hand was ever in his; and when her delicate frame became sensible of fatigue, her head drooped on his shoulder as its natural resting-place. Her father was a man who had lived long enough to have encountered many reverses of fortune, and they had left him, as I am

apt to believe long adversity usually *does* leave its prey, somewhat chilled and somewhat hardened to affection; passive and quiet of hope, resigned to the worst as to the common order of events, and expecting little from the best, as an unlooked-for incident in the regularity of human afflictions. He was insensible of his daughter's danger, for he was not one whom the fear of love endows with prophetic vision; and he lived tranquilly in the present, without asking what new misfortune awaited him in the future. Yet he loved his child, his only child, with whatever of affection was left him by the many shocks his heart had received; and in her approaching connection with one rich and noble as Trevylyan, he felt even something bordering upon pleasure. Lapped in the apathetic indifference of his nature, he leaned back in the carriage, enjoying the bright weather that attended their journey, and sensible—for he was one of fine and cultivated taste—of whatever beauties of nature or remains of art varied their course. A companion of this sort was the most agreeable that two persons never needing a third could desire; he left them undisturbed to the intoxication of their mutual presence; he marked not the interchange of glances; he listened not to the whisper, the low delicious whisper, with which the heart speaks its sympathy to heart. He broke not that charmed silence which falls over us when the thoughts are full, and words leave nothing to explain; that repose of feeling; that certainty that we are understood without the effort of words, which makes the real luxury of intercourse and the true enchantment of travel. What a memory hours like these bequeath, after we have settled down into the calm occupation of common life—how beautiful, through the vista of years, seems that brief moonlight track upon the waters of our youth!

And Trevylyan's nature, which, as I have said before, was naturally hard and stern, which was hot, irritable, ambitious, and prematurely tinctured with the policy and lessons of the world, seemed utterly changed by the pecu-

liarities of his love; every hour, every moment was full of incident to him; every look of Gertrude's was entered in the tablets of his heart; so that his love knew no languor, it required no change: he was absorbed in it—*it was himself!* And he was soft and watchful as the step of a mother by the couch of her sick child; the lion within him was tamed by indomitable love; the sadness, the presentiment that was mixed with all his passion for Gertrude, filled him, too, with that poetry of feeling which is the result of thoughts weighing upon us, and not to be expressed by ordinary language. In this part of their journey, as I find by the date, were the following lines written; they are to be judged as the lines of one in whom emotion and truth were the only inspiration:

I.

"As leaves left darkling in the flush of day,
When glints the glad sun chequering o'er the tree,
I see the green earth brightening in the ray,
Which only casts a shadow upon me!

II.

"What are the beams, the flowers, the glory, all
Life's glow and gloss—the music and the bloom,
When every sun but speeds the Eternal Pall,
And Time is Death that dallies with the Tomb?

III.

"And yet—oh yet, so young, so pure!—the while
Fresh laugh the rose-hues round youth's morning sky,
That voice,—those eyes,—the deep love of that smile,
Are they not soul—*all* soul—and *can* they die?

IV.

"Are there the words 'No More' for thoughts like ours?
Must the bark sink upon so soft a wave?
Hath the short summer of thy life no flowers
But those which bloom above thine early grave?

V.

"O God! and what is life, that I should live?
(Hath not the world enow of common clay?)
And she—the Rose—whose life a soul could give
To the void desert, sigh its sweets away?

VI.

"And I that love thee thus, to whom the air,
Blest by thy breath, makes heaven where'er it be,
Watch thy cheek wane, and smile away despair—
Lest it should dim one hour yet left to Thee.

VII.

"Still let me conquer self,—oh, still conceal
By the smooth brow the snake that coils below;
Break, break my heart! it comforts yet to feel
That *she* dreams on, unwaken'd by my woe!

VIII.

"Hush'd, where the Star's soft angel loves to keep
Watch o'er their tide, the mourning waters roll;
So glides my spirit—darkness in the deep,
But o'er the wave the presence of thy soul!"

Gertrude had not as yet the presentiments that filled the soul of Trevylyan. She thought too little of herself to know her danger, and those hours to her were hours of unmingled sweetness. Sometimes, indeed, the exhaustion of her disease tinged her spirits with a vague sadness, and abstraction came over her, and a languor she vainly struggled against. These fits of dejection and gloom touched Trevylyan to the quick; his eye never ceased to watch them, nor his heart to soothe. Often when he marked them, he sought to attract her attention from what he fancied, though erringly, a sympathy with his own forebodings, and to lead her young and romantic imagination through the temporary beguilements of fiction; for Gertrude was yet in the first bloom of youth, and all the dews of beautiful childhood sparkled freshly from the virgin blossoms of her mind. And Trevylyan, who had passed some of his early

years among the students of Leipsic, and was deeply versed in the various world of legendary lore, ransacked his memory for such tales as seemed to him most likely to win her interest; and often with false smiles entered into the playful tale, or oftener, with more faithful interest, into the graver legend of trials that warned yet beguiled them from their own. Of such tales I have selected but a few; I know not that they are the least unworthy of repetition; they are those which many recollections induce me to repeat the most willingly. Gertrude loved these stories, for she had not yet lost, by the coldness of the world, one leaf from that soft and wild romance which belonged to her beautiful mind. And, more than all, she loved the sound of a voice which every day became more and more musical to her ear. "Shall I tell you," said Trevylyan, one morning, as he observed her gloomier mood stealing over the face of Gertrude, "shall I tell you, ere yet we pass into the dull land of Holland, a story of Malines, whose spires we shall shortly see?" Gertrude's face brightened at once, and, as she leaned back in the carriage as it whirled rapidly along, and fixed her deep blue eyes on Trevylyan, he began the following tale.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAID OF MALINES.

It was noonday in the town of Malines, or Mechlin, as the English usually term it; the Sabbath bell had summoned the inhabitants to divine worship; and the crowd that had loitered round the Church of St. Rembauld had gradually emptied itself within the spacious aisles of the sacred edifice.

A young man was standing in the street, with his eyes bent on the ground, and apparently listening for some sound; for without raising his looks from the rude pave-

ment, he turned to every corner of it with an intent and anxious expression of countenance; he held in one hand a staff, in the other a long slender cord, the end of which trailed on the ground; every now and then he called, with a plaintive voice, "Fido, Fido, come back! Why hast thou deserted me?"—Fido returned not; the dog, wearied of confinement, had slipped from the string, and was at play with his kind in a distant quarter of the town, leaving the blind man to seek his way as he might to his solitary inn.

By and by a light step passed through the street, and the young stranger's face brightened.

"Pardon me," said he, turning to the spot where his quick ear had caught the sound, "and direct me, if you are not much pressed for a few moments' time, to the hotel *Mortier d' Or.*"

It was a young woman, whose dress betokened that she belonged to the middling class of life, whom he thus addressed:—"It is some distance hence, sir," said she; "but if you continue your way straight on for about a hundred yards, and then take the second turn to your right hand——"

"Alas!" interrupted the stranger, with a melancholy smile, "your direction will avail me little; my dog has deserted me, and I am blind!"

There was something in these words, and in the stranger's voice, which went irresistibly to the heart of the young woman.—"Pray forgive me," she said, almost with tears in her eyes, "I did not perceive your—" misfortune, she was about to say, but she checked herself with an instinctive delicacy. "Lean upon me, I will conduct you to the door; nay, sir,'" observing that he hesitated, "I have time enough to spare, I assure you."

The stranger placed his hand on the young woman's arm; and though Lucille was naturally so bashful that even her mother would laughingly reproach her for the excess of a maiden virtue, she felt not the least pang of shame, as she found herself thus suddenly walking through the streets of

Malines along with a young stranger, whose dress and air betokened him of rank superior to her own.

"Your voice is very gentle," said he, after a pause; "and that," he added, with a slight sigh, "is the only criterion by which I know the young and the beautiful!" Lucille now blushed, and with a slight mixture of pain in the blush, for she knew well that to beauty she had no pretension. "Are you a native of this town?" continued he.

"Yes, sir; my father holds a small office in the customs, and my mother and I eke out his salary by making lace. We are called poor, but we do not feel it, sir."

"You are fortunate! there is no wealth like the heart's wealth—content," answered the blind man, mournfully.

"And, monsieur," said Lucille, feeling angry with herself that she had awakened a natural envy in the stranger's mind, and anxious to change the subject—"and, monsieur, has he been long at Malines?"

"But yesterday. I am passing through the Low Countries on a tour; perhaps you smile at the tour of a blind man—but it is wearisome even to the blind to rest always in the same place. I thought during church-time, when the streets were empty, that I might, by the help of my dog, enjoy safely at least the air, if not the sight of the town: but there are some persons, methinks, who cannot have even a dog for a friend!"

The blind man spoke bitterly—the desertion of his dog had touched him to the core. Lucille wiped her eyes. "And does monsieur travel then alone?" said she; and looking at his face more attentively than she had yet ventured to do, she saw that he was scarcely above two-and-twenty. "His father, and his *mother*," she added, with an emphasis on the last word, "are they not with him?"

"I am an orphan!" answered the stranger; "and I have neither brother nor sister."

The desolate condition of the blind man quite melted Lucille; never had she been so strongly affected. She felt a strange flutter at the heart—a secret and earnest sym-

pathy, that attracted her at once towards him. She wished that Heaven had suffered her to be his sister.

The contrast between the youth and the form of the stranger, and the affliction which took hope from the one and activity from the other, increased the compassion he excited. His features were remarkably regular, and had a certain nobleness in their outline; and his frame was gracefully and firmly knit, though he moved cautiously and with no cheerful step.

They had now passed into a narrow street leading towards the hotel, when they heard behind them the clatter of hoofs; and Lucille, looking hastily back, saw that a troop of the Belgian horse was passing through the town.

She drew her charge close by the wall, and trembling with fear for him, she stationed herself by his side. The troop passed at a full trot through the street; and at the sound of their clanging arms, and the ringing hoofs of their heavy chargers, Lucille might have seen, had she looked at the blind man's face, that its sad features kindled with enthusiasm, and his head was raised proudly from its wonted and melancholy bend. "Thank Heaven!" she said, as the troop had nearly passed them, "the danger is over!" Not so. One of the last two soldiers who rode abreast was unfortunately mounted on a young and unmanageable horse. The rider's oaths and digging spur only increased the fire and impatience of the charger: it plunged from side to side of the narrow street.

"Look to yourselves!" cried the horseman, as he was borne on to the place where Lucille and the stranger stood against the wall. "Are ye mad?—why do you not run?"

"For Heaven's sake—for mercy's sake, he is blind!" cried Lucille, clinging to the stranger's side.

"Save yourself, my kind guide!" said the stranger. But Lucille dreamed not of such desertion. The trooper wrested the horse's head from the spot where they stood; with a snort, as it felt the spur, the enraged animal lashed out with its hind-legs; and Lucille, unable to save *both*, threw

herself before the blind man, and received the shock directed against him; her slight and delicate arm fell broken by her side—the horseman was borne onward. "Thank God, *you* are saved!" was poor Lucille's exclamation; and she fell, overcome with pain and terror, into the arms which the stranger mechanically opened to receive her.

"My guide! my friend!" cried he, "you are hurt, you——"

"No, sir," interrupted Lucille, faintly, "I am better—I am well. *This* arm, if you please—we are not far from your hotel now."

But the stranger's ear, tutored to every inflection of voice, told him at once of the pain she suffered; he drew from her by degrees the confession of the injury she had sustained; but the generous girl did not tell him it had been incurred solely in his protection. He now insisted on reversing their duties, and accompanying *her* to her home; and Lucille, almost fainting with pain, and hardly able to move, was forced to consent. But a few steps down the next turning stood the humble mansion of her father—they reached it—and Lucille scarcely crossed the threshold, before she sank down, and for some minutes was insensible to pain. It was left to the stranger to explain, and to beseech them immediately to send for a surgeon, "the most skilful—the most practised in the town," said he. "See, I am rich, and this is the least I can do to atone to your generous daughter, for not forsaking even a stranger in peril."

He held out his purse as he spoke, but the father refused the offer; and it saved the blind man some shame, that he could not see the blush of honest resentment with which so poor a species of remuneration was put aside.

The young man stayed till the surgeon arrived, till the arm was set; nor did he depart until he had obtained a promise from the mother that he should learn the next morning how the sufferer had passed the night.

The next morning, indeed, he had intended to quit a town that offers but little temptation to the traveller; but he

tarried day after day, until Lucille herself accompanied her mother, to assure him of her recovery.

You know, at least I do, dearest Gertrude, that there *is* such a thing as love at the first meeting—a secret, an unaccountable affinity between persons (strangers before) which draws them irresistibly together. As if there were truth in Plato's beautiful phantasy, that our souls were a portion of the stars, and that spirits, thus attracted to each other, have drawn their original light from the same orb; and yearn for a renewal of their former union. Yet without recurring to such fanciful solutions of a daily mystery, it was but natural that one in the forlorn and desolate condition of Eugene St. Amand should have felt a certain tenderness for a person who had so generously suffered for his sake.

The darkness to which he was condemned did not shut from his mind's eye the haunting images of Ideal beauty; rather, on the contrary, in his perpetual and unoccupied solitude, he fed the reveries of an imagination naturally warm, and a heart eager for sympathy and commune.

He had said rightly that his only test of beauty was in the melody of voice; and never had a softer or more thrilling tone than that of the young maiden touched upon his ear. Her exclamation, so beautifully denying self, so devoted in its charity, "Thank God, *you* are saved!" uttered, too, in the moment of her own suffering, rang constantly upon his soul, and he yielded, without precisely defining their nature, to vague and delicious sentiments, that his youth had never awakened to till then. And Lucille,—the very accident that had happened to her on his behalf only deepened the interest she had already conceived for one who, in the first flush of youth, was thus cut off from the glad objects of life, and left to a night of years desolate and alone. There is, to your beautiful and kindly sex, a natural inclination to *protect*. This makes them the angels of sickness, the comforters of age, the fosterers of childhood; and this feeling, in Lucille peculiarly developed, had already inexpressibly linked her compassionate nature to the lot of

the unfortunate traveller. With ardent affections, and with thoughts beyond her station and her years, she was not without that modest vanity which made her painfully susceptible to her own deficiencies in beauty. Instinctively conscious of how deeply she herself could love, she believed it impossible that she could ever be so loved in return. The stranger, so superior in her eyes to all she had yet seen, was the first who had ever addressed her in that voice which by tones, not words, speaks that admiration most dear to a woman's heart. To *him* she was beautiful, and her lovely mind spoke out undimmed by the imperfections of her face. Not, indeed, that Lucille was wholly without personal attraction; her light step and graceful form were elastic with the freshness of youth, and her mouth and smile had so gentle and tender an expression, that there were moments when it would not have been the blind only who would have mistaken her to be beautiful. Her early childhood had indeed given the promise of attractions, which the smallpox, that then fearful malady, had inexorably marred. It had not only seared the smooth skin and brilliant hues, but utterly changed even the character of the features. It so happened that Lucille's family were celebrated for beauty, and vain of that celebrity; and so bitterly had her parents deplored the effects of the cruel malady, that poor Lucille had been early taught to consider them far more grievous than they really were, and to exaggerate the advantages of that beauty, the loss of which was considered by her parents so heavy a misfortune. Lucille, too, had a cousin named Julie, who was the wonder of all Malines for her personal perfections; and as the cousins were much together, the contrast was too striking not to occasion frequent mortification to Lucille. But every misfortune has something of a counterpoise; and the consciousness of personal inferiority had meekened, without souring, her temper, had given gentleness to a spirit that otherwise might have been too high, and humility to a mind that was naturally strong, impassioned, and energetic.

And yet Lucille had long conquered the one disadvantage she most dreaded in the want of beauty. Lucille was never known but to be loved. Wherever came her presence, her bright and soft mind diffused a certain inexpressible charm; and where she was not, a something was absent from the scene which not even Julie's beauty could replace.

"I propose," said St. Amand to Madame le Tisseur, Lucille's mother, as he sat in her little salon,—for he had already contracted that acquaintance with the family which permitted him to be led to their house, to return the visits Madame le Tisseur had made him, and his dog, once more returned a penitent to his master, always conducted his steps to the humble abode, and stopped instinctively at the door,—"I propose," said St. Amand, after a pause, and with some embarrassment, "to stay a little while longer at Malines; the air agrees with me, and I like the quiet of the place; but you are aware, madam, that at a hotel, among strangers, I feel my situation somewhat cheerless. I have been thinking"—St. Amand paused again—"I have been thinking that if I could persuade some agreeable family to receive me as a lodger, I would fix myself here for some weeks. I am easily pleased."

"Doubtless there are many in Malines who would be too happy to receive such a lodger."

"Will you receive me?" asked St. Amand, abruptly. "It was of *your* family I thought."

"Of us? Monsieur is too flattering. But we have scarcely a room good enough for you."

"What difference between one room and another can there be to me? That is the best apartment to my choice in which the human voice sounds most kindly."

The arrangement was made, and St. Amand came now to reside beneath the same roof as Lucille. And was she not happy that *he* wanted so constant an attendance? was she not happy that she was ever of use? St. Amand was passionately fond of music; he played himself with a skill that was only surpassed by the exquisite melody of his voice;

and was not Lucille happy when she sat mute and listening to such sounds as in Malines were never heard before? Was she not happy in gazing on a face to whose melancholy aspect her voice instantly summoned the smile? Was she not happy when the music ceased, and St. Amand called "Lucille"? Did not her own name uttered by that voice seem to her even sweeter than the music? Was she not happy when they walked out in the still evenings of summer, and her arm thrilled beneath the light touch of one to whom she was so necessary? Was she not proud in her happiness, and was there not something like worship in the gratitude she felt to him for raising her humble spirit to the luxury of feeling herself beloved?

St. Amand's parents were French. They had resided in the neighbourhood of Amiens, where they had inherited a competent property, to which he had succeeded about two years previous to the date of my story.

He had been blind from the age of three years. "I know not," said he, as he related these particulars to Lucille one evening when they were alone; "I know not what the earth may be like, or the heaven, or the rivers whose voice at least I can hear, for I have no recollection beyond that of a confused, but delicious blending of a thousand glorious colours—a bright and quick sense of joy—A VISIBLE MUSIC. But it is only since my childhood closed that I have mourned, as I now unceasingly mourn, for the light of day. My boyhood passed in a quiet cheerfulness; the least trifle then could please and occupy the vacancies of my mind; but it was as I took delight in being read to,—as I listened to the vivid descriptions of Poetry, as I glowed at the recital of great deeds, as I was made acquainted by books with the energy, the action, the heat, the fervour, the pomp, the enthusiasm of life, that I gradually opened to the sense of all I was for ever denied. I felt that I existed, not lived; and that, in the midst of the Universal Liberty, I was sentenced to a prison, from whose blank walls there was no escape. Still, however, while my parents lived, I had

something of consolation; at least I was not alone. They died, and a sudden and dread solitude, a vast and empty dreariness, settled upon my dungeon. One old servant only, who had attended me from my childhood, who had known me in my short privilege of light, by whose recollections my mind could grope back its way through the dark and narrow passages of memory to faint glimpses of the sun, was all that remained to me of human sympathies. It did not suffice, however, to content me with a home where my father and my mother's kind voice were *not*. A restless impatience, an anxiety to move possessed me, and I set out from my home, journeying whither I cared not, so that at least I could change an air that weighed upon me like a palpable burthen. I took only this old attendant as my companion; he, too, died three months since at Bruxelles, worn out with years. Alas! I had forgotten that he was old, for I saw not his progress to decay; and now, save my faithless dog, I was utterly alone, till I came hither and found *thee*."

Lucille stooped down to caress the dog; she blessed the desertion that had led him to a friend who never could desert.

But however much, and however gratefully, St. Amand loved Lucille, her power availed not to chase the melancholy from his brow, and to reconcile him to his forlorn condition.

"Ah! Would that I could see thee! would that I could look upon a face that my heart vainly endeavors to delineate!"

"If thou couldst," sighed Lucille, "thou wouldst cease to love me."

"Impossible!" cried St. Amand, passionately. "However the world may find thee, *thou* wouldst become my standard of beauty; and I should judge not of thee by others, but of others by thee."

He loved to hear Lucille read to him, and mostly he loved the descriptions of war, of travel, of wild adventure, and yet they occasioned him the most pain. Often she paused

from the page as she heard him sigh, and felt that she would even have renounced the bliss of being loved by him, if she could have restored to him that blessing, the desire for which haunted him as a spectre.

Lucille's family were Catholic, and, like most in their station, they possessed the superstitions, as well as the devotion of the faith. Sometimes they amused themselves of an evening by the various legends and imaginary miracles of their calendar: and once, as they were thus conversing with two or three of their neighbors, "The Tomb of the Three Kings of Cologne" became the main topic of their wondering recitals. However strong was the sense of Lucille, she was, as you will readily conceive, naturally influenced by the belief of those with whom she had been brought up from her cradle, and she listened to tale after tale of the miracles wrought at the consecrated tomb, as earnestly and undoubtingly as the rest.

And the Kings of the East were no ordinary saints; to the relics of the Three Magi, who followed the Star of Bethlehem, and were the first potentates of the earth who adored its Saviour, well might the pious Catholic suppose that a peculiar power and a healing sanctity would belong. Each of the circle (St. Amand, who had been more than usually silent, and even gloomy during the day, had retired to his own apartment, for there were some moments when, in the sadness of his thoughts, he sought that solitude which he so impatiently fled from at others)—each of the circle had some story to relate equally veracious and indisputable, of an infirmity cured, or a prayer accorded, or a sin atoned for at the foot of the holy tomb. One story peculiarly affected Lucille; the narrator, a venerable old man with grey locks, solemnly declared himself a witness of its truth.

A woman at Anvers had given birth to a son, the offspring of an illicit connection, who came into the world deaf and dumb. The unfortunate mother believed the calamity a punishment for her own sin. "Ah! would,"

said she, "that the affliction had fallen only upon me! Wretch that I am, my innocent child is punished for my offence!" This idea haunted her night and day: she pined and could not be comforted. As the child grew up, and wound himself more and more round her heart, his caresses added new pangs to her remorse; and at length (continued the narrator) hearing perpetually of the holy fame of the Tomb of Cologne, she resolved upon a pilgrimage barefoot to the shrine. "God is merciful," said she; "and He who called Magdalene His sister may take the mother's curse from the child." She then went to Cologne; she poured her tears, her penitence, and her prayers at the sacred tomb. When she returned to her native town, what was her dismay as she approached her cottage to behold it a heap of ruins!—its blackened rafters and yawning casements betokened the ravages of fire. The poor woman sank upon the ground utterly overpowered. Had her son perished? At that moment she heard the cry of a child's voice, and, lo! her child rushed to her arms and called her "mother!"

He had been saved from the fire, which had broken out seven days before; but in the terror he had suffered, the string that tied his tongue had been loosened; he had uttered articulate sounds of distress; the curse was removed, and one word at least the kind neighbors had already taught him to welcome his mother's return. What cared she now that her substance was gone, that her roof was ashes?—she bowed in grateful submission to so mild a stroke; her prayer had been heard, and the sin of the mother was visited no longer on the child.

I have said, dear Gertrude, that this story made a deep impression upon Lucille. A misfortune so nearly akin to that of St. Amand removed by the prayer of another filled her with devoted thoughts and a beautiful hope. "Is not the tomb still standing?" thought she. "Is not God still in heaven?—He who heard the guilty, may He not hear the guiltless? Is He not the God of love? Are not the affections the offerings that please Him best? and what though

the child's mediator was his mother, can even a mother love her child more tenderly than I love Eugene? But if, Lucille, thy prayer be granted, if he recover his sight, *thy* charm is gone, he will love thee no longer. No matter! be it so—I shall at least have made him happy!"

Such were the thoughts that filled the mind of Lucille; she cherished them till they settled into resolution, and she secretly vowed to perform her pilgrimage of love. She told neither St. Amand nor her parents of her intention; she knew the obstacles such an announcement would create. Fortunately she had an aunt settled at Bruxelles, to whom she had been accustomed once in every year to pay a month's visit, and at that time she generally took with her the work of a twelvemonth's industry, which found a readier sale at Bruxelles than at Malines. Lucille and St. Amand were already betrothed; their wedding was shortly to take place; and the custom of the country leading parents, however poor, to nourish the honorable ambition of giving some dowry with their daughters, Lucille found it easy to hide the object of her departure, under the pretence of taking the lace to Bruxelles, which had been the year's labor of her mother and herself—it would sell for sufficient, at least, to defray the preparations for the wedding.

"Thou art ever right, child," said Madame le Tisseur; "the richer St. Amand is, why the less oughtest thou to go a beggar to his house."

In fact, the honest ambition of the good people was excited; their pride had been hurt by the envy of the town and the current congratulations on so advantageous a marriage; and they employed themselves in counting up the fortune they should be able to give to their only child, and flattering their pardonable vanity with the notion that there would be no such great disproportion in the connection after all. They were right, but not in their own view of the estimate; the wealth that Lucille brought was what fate could not lessen,—reverse could not reach—the ungracious seasons could not blight its sweet harvest,—imprudence could not

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dissipate, fraud could not steal, one grain from its abundant coffers! Like the purse in the Fairy Tale, its use was hourly, its treasure inexhaustible.

St. Amand alone was not to be won to her departure; he chafed at the notion of a dowry; he was not appeased even by Lucille's representation that it was only to gratify and not to impoverish her parents. "And *thou*, too, canst leave me!" he said, in that plaintive voice which had made his first charm to Lucille's heart. "It is a double blindness!"

"But for a few days; a fortnight at most, dearest Eugene."

"A fortnight! you do not reckon time as the blind do," said St. Amand, bitterly.

"But listen, listen, dear Eugene," said Lucille, weeping.

The sound of her sobs restored him to a sense of his ingratitude. Alas, he knew not how much he had to be grateful for! He held out his arms to her. "Forgive me," said he. "Those who can see nature know not how terrible it is to be alone."

"But my mother will not leave you."

"She is not you!"

"And Julie," said Lucille, hesitatingly.

"What is Julie to me?"

"Ah, you are the only one, save my parents, who could think of me in her presence."

"And why, Lucille?"

"Why! She is more beautiful than a dream."

"Say not so. Would I could see, that I might prove to the world how much more beautiful thou art! There is no music in *her* voice."

The evening before Lucille departed she sat up late with St. Amand and her mother. They conversed on the future; they made plans; in the wide sterility of the world they laid out the garden of household love, and filled it with flowers, forgetful of the wind that scatters and the frost that kills. And when, leaning on Lucille's arm, St.

Amand sought his chamber, and they parted at his door, which closed upon her, she fell down on her knees at the threshold, and poured out the fulness of her heart in a prayer for his safety and the fulfilment of her timid hope.

At daybreak she was consigned to the conveyance that performed the short journey from Malines to Bruxelles. When she entered the town, instead of seeking her aunt, she rested at an auberge in the suburbs, and confiding her little basket of lace to the care of its hostess, she set out alone, and on foot, upon the errand of her heart's lovely superstition. And erring though it was, her faith redeemed its weakness—her affection made it even sacred. And well may we believe that the Eye which reads all secrets scarce looked reprovingly on that fanaticism whose only infirmity was love.

So fearful was she lest, by rendering the task too easy, she might impair the effect, that she scarcely allowed herself rest or food. Sometimes, in the heat of noon, she wandered a little from the roadside, and under the spreading lime trees surrendered her mind to its sweet and bitter thoughts; but ever the restlessness of her enterprise urged her on, and faint, weary, and with bleeding feet, she started up and continued her way. At length she reached the ancient city, where a holier age has scarce worn from the habits and aspects of men the Roman trace. She prostrated herself at the tomb of the Magi; she proffered her ardent but humble prayer to Him before whose Son those fleshless heads (yet to faith at least preserved) had, eighteen centuries ago, bowed in adoration. Twice every day, for a whole week, she sought the same spot, and poured forth the same prayer. The last day an old priest, who, hovering in the church, had observed her constantly at devotion, with that fatherly interest which the better ministers of the Catholic sect (that sect which has covered the earth with the mansions of charity) feel for the unhappy, approached her as she was retiring with moist and downcast eyes, and saluting her, assumed the privilege of his order to inquire if there

was aught in which his advice or aid could serve. There was something in the venerable air of the old man which encouraged Lucille; she opened her heart to him; she told him all. The good priest was much moved by her simplicity and earnestness. He questioned her minutely as to the peculiar species of blindness with which St. Amand was afflicted; and after musing a little while, he said, "Daughter, God is great and merciful; we must trust in His power, but we must not forget that He mostly works by mortal agents. As you pass through Louvain in your way home, fail not to see there a certain physician, named Le Kain. He is celebrated through Flanders for the cures he has wrought among the blind, and his advice is sought by all classes from far and near. He lives hard by the Hôtel de Ville, but any one will inform you of his residence. Stay, my child, you shall take him a note from me; he is a benevolent and kindly man, and you shall tell him exactly the same story (and with the same voice) you have told to me."

So saying, the priest made Lucille accompany him to his home, and forcing her to refresh herself less sparingly than she had yet done since she had left Malines, he gave her his blessing, and a letter to Le Kain, which he rightly judged would insure her a patient hearing from the physician. Well known among all men of science was the name of the priest, and a word of recommendation from him went farther, where virtue and wisdom were honoured, than the longest letter from the haughtiest sieur in Flanders.

With a patient and hopeful spirit, the young pilgrim turned her back on the Roman Cologne; and now about to rejoin St. Amand, she felt neither the heat of the sun nor the weariness of the road. It was one day at noon that she again passed through Louvain, and she soon found herself by the noble edifice of the Hôtel de Ville. Proud rose its spires against the sky, and the sun shone bright on its rich tracery and Gothic casements; the broad open street was crowded with persons of all classes, and it was with some modest alarm that Lucille lowered her veil and min-

gled with the throng. It was easy, as the priest had said, to find the house of Le Kain; she bade the servant take the priest's letter to his master, and she was not long kept waiting before she was admitted to the physician's presence. He was a spare, tall man, with a bald front, and a calm and friendly countenance. He was not less touched than the priest had been by the manner in which she narrated her story, described the affliction of her betrothed, and the hope that had inspired the pilgrimage she had just made.

"Well," said he, encouragingly, "we must see our patient. You can bring him hither to me."

"Ah, sir, I had hoped——" Lucille stopped suddenly.

"What, my young friend?"

"That I might have had the triumph of bringing you to Malines. I know, sir, what you are about to say; and I know, sir, your time must be very valuable; but I am not so poor as I seem, and Eugene, that is, Monsieur St. Amand, is very rich, and—and I have at Bruxelles, what I am sure is a large sum; it was to have provided for the wedding, but it is most heartily at your service, sir."

Le Kain smiled; he was one of those men who love to read the human heart when its leaves are fair and undefiled; and, in the benevolence of science, he would have gone a longer journey than from Louvain to Malines to give sight to the blind, even had St. Amand been a beggar.

"Well, well," said he; "but you forget that Monsieur St. Amand is not the only one in the world who wants me. I must look at my notebook, and see if I can be spared for a day or two."

So saying, he glanced at his memoranda; everything smiled on Lucille; he had no engagements that his partner could not fulfil, for some days; he consented to accompany Lucille to Malines.

Meanwhile, cheerless and dull had passed the time to St. Amand; he was perpetually asking Madame le Tisseur what hour it was, it was almost his only question. There seemed

to him no sun in the heavens, no freshness in the air, and he even forbore his favourite music; the instrument had lost its sweetness since Lucille was not by to listen.

It was natural that the gossips of Malines should feel some envy at the marriage Lucille was about to make with one whose competence report had exaggerated into prodigal wealth, whose birth had been elevated from the respectable to the noble, and whose handsome person was clothed, by the interest excited by his misfortune, with the beauty of Antinous. Even that misfortune, which ought to have levelled all distinctions, was not sufficient to check the general envy; perhaps to some of the damsels of Malines blindness in a husband would not have seemed an unwelcome infirmity! But there was one in whom this envy rankled with a peculiar sting: it was the beautiful, the all-conquering Julie! That the humble, the neglected Lucille should be preferred to her; that Lucille, whose existence was well-nigh forgot beside Julie's, should become thus suddenly of importance; that there should be one person in the world, and that person young, rich, handsome, to whom she was less than nothing, when weighed in the balance with Lucille, mortified to the quick a vanity that had never till then received a wound. "It is well," she would say with a bitter jest, "that Lucille's lover is blind. To be the one it is necessary to be the other!"

During Lucille's absence she had been constantly in Madame le Tisseur's house; indeed, Lucille had prayed her to be so. She had sought, with an industry that astonished herself, to supply Lucille's place, and among the strange contradictions of human nature, she had learned during her efforts to please, to love the object of those efforts,—as much at least as she was capable of loving.

She conceived a positive hatred to Lucille; she persisted in imagining that nothing but the accident of first acquaintance had deprived her of a conquest with which she persuaded herself her happiness had become connected. Had St. Amand never loved Lucille and proposed to Julie, his

misfortune would have made her reject him, despite his wealth and his youth; but to be Lucille's lover, and a conquest to be won from Lucille, raised him instantly to an importance not his own. Safe, however, in his affliction, the arts and beauty of Julie fell harmless on the fidelity of St. Amand. Nay, he liked her less than ever, for it seemed an impertinence in any one to counterfeit the anxiety and watchfulness of Lucille.

"It is time, surely it is time, Madame le Tisseur, that Lucille should return? She might have sold all the lace in Malines by this time," said St. Amand, one day, peevishly.

"Patience, my dear friend, patience; perhaps she may return to-morrow."

"To-morrow! let me see, it is only six o'clock—only six, you are sure?"

"Just five, dear Eugene—shall I read to you? This is a new book from Paris; it has made a great noise," said Julie.

"You are very kind, but I will not trouble you."

"It is anything but trouble."

"In a word, then, I would rather not."

"Oh! that he could see," thought Julie; "would I not punish him for this!"

"I hear carriage wheels, who can be passing this way? Surely it is the voiturier from Bruxelles," said St. Amand, starting up; "it is his day—his hour, too. No, no, it is a lighter vehicle," and he sank down listlessly on his seat.

Nearer and nearer rolled the wheels; they turned the corner; they stopped at the lowly door; and, overcome, overjoyed, Lucille was clasped to the bosom of St. Amand.

"Stay," said she, blushing, as she recovered her self-possession, and turned to Le Kain; "pray pardon me, sir. Dear Eugene, I have brought with me one who, by God's blessing, may yet restore you to sight."

"We must not be sanguine, my child," said Le Kain; "anything is better than disappointment."

To close this part of my story, dear Gertrude, Le Kain examined St. Amand, and the result of the examination was a confident belief in the probability of a cure. St. Amand gladly consented to the experiment of an operation; it succeeded—the blind man saw! Oh! what were Lucille's feelings, what her emotion, what her joy, when she found the object of her pilgrimage,—of her prayers—fulfilled! That joy was so intense, that in the eternal alterations of human life she might have foretold from its excess how bitter the sorrows fated to ensue.

As soon as by degrees the patient's new sense became reconciled to the light, his first, his only demand was for Lucille. "No, let me not see her alone, let me see her in the midst of you all, that I may convince you that the heart never is mistaken in its instincts." With a fearful, a sinking presentiment, Lucille yielded to the request, to which the impetuous St. Amand would hear indeed no denial. The father, the mother, Julie, Lucille, Julie's younger sisters, assembled in the little parlour; the door opened, and St. Amand stood hesitating on the threshold. One look around sufficed to him; his face brightened, he uttered a cry of joy. "Lucille! Lucille!" he exclaimed, "it is you, I know it, *you* only!" He sprang forward *and fell at the feet of Julie!*

Flushed, elated, triumphant, Julie bent upon him her sparkling eyes; *she* did not undeceive him.

"You are wrong, you mistake," said Madame le Tisseur, in confusion; "that is her cousin Julie—this is your Lucille."

St. Amand rose, turned, saw Lucille, and at that moment she wished herself in her grave. Surprise, mortification, disappointment, almost dismay, were depicted in his gaze. He had been haunting his prison-house with dreams, and now, set free, he felt how unlike they were to the truth. Too new to observation to read the woe, the despair, the lapse and shrinking of the whole frame, that his look occasioned Lucille, he yet felt, when the first shock of his

surprise was over, that it was not thus he should thank her who had restored him to sight. He hastened to redeem his error—ah! how could it be redeemed?

From that hour all Lucille's happiness was at an end; her fairy palace was shattered in the dust; the magician's wand was broken up; the Ariel was given to the winds; and the bright enchantment no longer distinguished the land she lived in from the rest of the barren world. It was true that St. Amand's words were kind; it is true that he remembered with the deepest gratitude all she had done in his behalf; it is true that he forced himself again and again to say, "She is my betrothed—my benefactress!" and he cursed himself to think that the feelings he had entertained for her were fled. Where was the passion of his words? where the ardour of his tone? where that play and light of countenance which her step, *her* voice, could formerly call forth! When they were alone he was embarrassed and constrained, and almost cold; his hand no longer sought hers, his soul no longer missed her if she was absent a moment from his side. When in their household circle he seemed visibly more at ease; but did his eyes fasten upon her who had opened them to the day? did they not wander at every interval with a too eloquent admiration to the blushing and radiant face of the exulting Julie? This was not, you will believe, suddenly perceptible in one day or one week, but every day it was perceptible more and more. Yet still—bewitched, ensnared, as St. Amand was—he never perhaps would have been guilty of an infidelity that he strove with the keenest remorse to wrestle against, had it not been for the fatal contrast, at the first moment of his gushing enthusiasm, which Julie had presented to Lucille; but for that he would have formed no previous idea of real and living beauty to aid the disappointment of his imaginings and his dreams. He would have seen Lucille young and graceful, and with eyes beaming affection, contrasted only by the wrinkled countenance and bended frame of her parents, and she would have completed her conquest over

him before he had discovered that she was less beautiful than others; nay, more—that infidelity never could have lasted above the first few days, if the vain and heartless object of it had not exerted every art, all the power and witchery of her beauty, to cement and continue it. The unfortunate Lucille—so susceptible to the slightest change in those she loved, so diffident of herself, so proud, too, in that diffidence—no longer necessary, no longer missed, no longer loved—could not bear to endure the galling comparison between the past and the present. She fled uncomplainingly to her chamber to indulge her tears, and thus, unhappily, absent as her father generally was during the day, and busied as her mother was either at work or in household matters, she left Julie a thousand opportunities to complete the power she had begun to wield over—no, not the heart—the *senses* of St. Amand! Yet, still not suspecting, in the open generosity of her mind, the whole extent of her affliction, poor Lucille buoyed herself at times with the hope that when once married, when, once in that intimacy of friendship, the unspeakable love she felt for him could disclose itself with less restraint than at present,—she would perhaps regain a heart which had been so devotedly hers, that she could not think that without a fault it was irrevocably gone: on that hope she anchored all the little happiness that remained to her. And still St. Amand pressed their marriage, but in what different tones! In fact, he wished to preclude from himself the possibility of a deeper ingratitude than that which he had incurred already. He vainly thought that the broken reed of love might be bound up and strengthened by the ties of duty; and at least he was anxious that his hand, his fortune, his esteem, his gratitude, should give to Lucille the only recompense it was now in his power to bestow. Meanwhile left alone so often with Julie, and Julie bent on achieving the last triumph over his heart, St. Amand was gradually preparing a far different reward, a far different return for her to whom he owed so incalculable a debt.

There was a garden behind the house, in which there was a small arbour where often in the summer evenings Eugene and Lucille had sat together—hours never to return! One day she heard from her own chamber, where she sat mourning, the sound of St. Amand's flute swelling gently from that beloved and consecrated bower. She wept as she heard it, and the memories that the music bore, softening and endearing his image, she began to reproach herself that she had yielded so often to the impulse of her wounded feelings; that, chilled by *his* coldness, she had left him so often to himself, and had not sufficiently dared to tell him of that affection which, in her modest self-depreciation, constituted her only pretension to his love. "Perhaps he is alone now," she thought; "the air, too, is one which he knows that I love:" and with her heart in her step, she stole from the house and sought the arbour. She had scarce turned from her chamber when the flute ceased; as she neared the arbour she heard voices—Julie's voice in grief, St. Amand's in consolation. A dread foreboding seized her; her feet clung rooted to the earth.

"Yes, marry her—forget me," said Julie; "in a few days you will be another's, and I, I—forgive me, Eugene, forgive me that I have disturbed your happiness. I am punished sufficiently—my heart will break, but it will break in loving you;" sobs choked Julie's voice.

"Oh, speak not thus," said St. Amand. "I, *I* only am to blame; I, false to both, to both ungrateful. Oh, from the hour that these eyes opened upon you I drank in a new life; the sun itself to me was less wonderful than your beauty. But—but—let me forget that hour. What do I not owe to Lucille? I shall be wretched—I shall deserve to be so; for shall I not think, Julie, that I have embittered your life with our ill-fated love? But all that I can give—my hand—my home—my plighted faith—must be hers. Nay, Julie, nay—why that look? could I act otherwise? can I dream otherwise? Whatever the sacrifice, *must* I not render it? Ah, what do I owe to Lucille, were

it only for the thought that but for her I might never have seen thee!"

Lucille stayed to hear no more; with the same soft step as that which had borne her within hearing of these fatal words, she turned back once more to her desolate chamber.

That evening, as St. Amand was sitting alone in his apartment, he heard a gentle knock at the door. "Come in," he said, and Lucille entered. He started in some confusion, and would have taken her hand, but she gently repulsed him. She took a seat opposite to him, and looking down, thus addressed him:

"My dear Eugene, that is, Monsieur St. Amand, I have something on my mind that I think it better to speak at once; and if I do not exactly express what I would wish to say, you must not be offended with Lucille: it is not an easy matter to put into words what one feels deeply." Colouring, and suspecting something of the truth, St. Amand would have broken in upon her here; but she, with a gentle impatience, motioned him to be silent, and continued:

"You know that when you once loved me, I used to tell you that you would cease to do so could you see how undeserving I was of your attachment. I did not deceive myself, Eugene; I always felt assured that such would be the case, that your love for me necessarily rested on your affliction; but for all that I never at least had a dream or a desire but for your happiness; and God knows, that if again, by walking barefooted, not to Cologne, but to Rome—to the end of the world, I could save you from a much less misfortune than that of blindness, I would cheerfully do it; yes, even though I might foretell all the while that, on my return, you would speak to me coldly, think of me lightly, and that the penalty to me would—would be—what it has been!" Here Lucille wiped a few natural tears from her eyes. St. Amand, struck to the heart, covered his face with his hands without the courage to interrupt her. Lucille continued:

"That which I foresaw has come to pass; I am no longer to you what I once was, when you could clothe this poor form and this homely face with a beauty they did not possess; you would wed me still, it is true; but I am proud, Eugene, and cannot stoop to gratitude where I once had love. I am not so unjust as to blame you; the change was natural, was inevitable. I should have steeled myself more against it; but I am now resigned: we must part; you love Julie—that, too, is natural—and *she* loves you; ah! what also more in the probable course of events? Julie loves you, not yet, perhaps, so much as I did, but then she has not known you as I have, and she whose whole life has been triumph cannot feel the gratitude that I felt at fancying myself loved, but this will come—God grant it! Farewell, then, for ever, dear Eugene; I leave you when you no longer want me; you are now independent of Lucille; wherever you go, a thousand hereafter can supply my place. Farewell!"

She rose, as she said this, to leave the room; but St. Amand seizing her hand, which she in vain endeavoured to withdraw from his clasp, poured forth incoherently, passionately, his reproaches on himself, his eloquent persuasion against her resolution.

"I confess," said he, "that I have been allured for a moment; I confess that Julie's beauty made me less sensible to your stronger, your holier, oh! far, far holier title to my love! But forgive me, dearest Lucille; already I return to you, to all I once felt for you; make me not curse the blessing of sight that I owe to you. You must not leave me; never can we two part; try me, only try me, and if ever hereafter my heart wander from you, *then*, Lucille, leave me to my remorse!"

Even at that moment Lucille did not yield; she felt that his prayer was but the enthusiasm of the hour; she felt that there was a virtue in her pride; that to leave him was a duty to herself. In vain he pleaded; in vain were his embraces, his prayers; in vain he reminded her of their

plighted troth, of her aged parents, whose happiness had become wrapt in her union with him: "How,—even were it as you wrongly believe,—how, in honour to them, can I desert you, can I wed another?"

"Trust that, trust all, to me," answered Lucille; "your honour shall be my care, none shall blame *you;* only do not let your marriage with Julie be celebrated here before their eyes: that is all I ask, all they can expect. God bless you! do not fancy I shall be unhappy, for whatever happiness the world gives you, shall I not have contributed to bestow it?—and with that thought I am above compassion."

She glided from his arms and left him to a solitude more bitter even than that of blindness. That very night Lucille sought her mother; to her she confided all. I pass over the reasons she urged, the arguments she overcame; she conquered rather than convinced, and leaving to Madame le Tisseur the painful task of breaking to her father her unalterable resolution, she quitted Malines the next morning, and with a heart too honest to be utterly without comfort, paid that visit to her aunt which had been so long deferred.

The pride of Lucille's parents prevented them from reproaching St. Amand. He could not bear, however, their cold and altered looks; he left their house; and though for several days he would not even see Julie, yet her beauty and her art gradually resumed their empire over him. They were married at Courtroi, and, to the joy of the vain Julie, departed to the gay metropolis of France. But, before their departure, before his marriage, St. Amand endeavoured to appease his conscience by obtaining for Monsieur le Tisseur a much more lucrative and honorable office than that he now held. Rightly judging that Malines could no longer be a pleasant residence for them, and much less for Lucille, the duties of the post were to be fulfilled in another town; and knowing that Monsieur le Tisseur's delicacy would revolt at receiving such a favour from his hands, he kept the nature of his negotiation a close secret, and

suffered the honest citizen to believe that his own merits alone had entitled him to so unexpected a promotion.

Time went on. This quiet and simple history of humble affections took its date in a stormy epoch of the world—the dawning Revolution of France. The family of Lucille had been little more than a year settled in their new residence when Dumouriez led his army into the Netherlands. But how meanwhile had that year passed for Lucille? I have said that her spirit was naturally high; that though so tender, she was not weak; her very pilgrimage to Cologne alone, and at the timid age of seventeen, proved that there was a strength in her nature no less than a devotion in her love. The sacrifice she had made brought its own reward. She believed St. Amand was happy, and she would not give way to the selfishness of grief; she had still duties to perform; she could still comfort her parents and cheer their age; she could still be all the world to them: she felt this, and was consoled. Only once during the year had she heard of Julie; she had been seen by a mutual friend at Paris, gay, brilliant, courted, and admired; of St. Amand she heard nothing.

My tale, dear Gertrude, does not lead me through the harsh scenes of war. I do not tell you of the slaughter and the siege, and the blood that inundated those fair lands—the great battle-field of Europe. The people of the Netherlands in general were with the cause of Dumouriez, but the town in which Le Tisseur dwelt offered some faint resistance to his arms. Le Tisseur himself, despite his age, girded on his sword; the town was carried, and the fierce and licentious troops of the conqueror poured, flushed with their easy victory, through its streets. Le Tisseur's house was filled with drunken and rude troopers; Lucille herself trembled in the fierce gripe of one of those dissolute soldiers, more bandit than soldier, whom the subtle Dumouriez had united to his army, and by whose blood he so often saved that of his nobler band; her shrieks, her cries, were vain, when suddenly the troopers gave way; "The Cap-

tain! brave Captain!" was shouted forth; the insolent soldier, felled by a powerful arm, sank senseless at the feet of Lucille, and a glorious form, towering above its fellows,—even through its glittering garb, even in that dreadful hour, remembered at a glance by Lucille, stood at her side; her protector—her guardian! Thus once more she beheld St. Amand!

The house was cleared in an instant—the door barred. Shouts, groans, wild snatches of exulting song, the clang of arms, the tramp of horses, the hurrying footsteps, the deep music sounded loud, and blended terribly without. Lucille heard them not,—she was on that breast which never should have deserted her.

Effectually to protect his friends, St. Amand took up his quarters at their house; and for two days he was once more under the same roof as Lucille. He never recurred voluntarily to Julie; he answered Lucille's timid inquiry after her health, briefly, and with coldness, but he spoke with all the enthusiasm of a long-pent and ardent spirit, of the new profession he had embraced. Glory seemed now to be his only mistress; and the vivid delusion of the first bright dreams of the Revolution filled his mind, broke from his tongue, and lighted up those dark eyes which Lucille had redeemed to day.

She saw him depart at the head of his troops; she saw his proud crest glancing in the sun; she saw his steed winding through the narrow street; she saw that his last glance reverted to her, where she stood at the door; and, as he waved his adieu, she fancied that there was on his face that look of deep and grateful tenderness which reminded her of the one bright epoch of her life.

She was right; St. Amand had long since in bitterness repented of a transient infatuation, had long since distinguished the true Florimel from the false, and felt that, in Julie, Lucille's wrongs were avenged. But in the hurry and heat of war he plunged that regret—the keenest of all—which embodies the bitter words, "TOO LATE!"

Years passed away, and in the resumed tranquillity of Lucille's life the brilliant apparition of St. Amand appeared as something dreamed of, not seen. The star of Napoleon had risen above the horizon; the romance of his early career had commenced; and the campaign of Egypt had been the herald of those brilliant and meteoric successes which flashed forth from the gloom of the Revolution of France.

You are aware, dear Gertrude, how many in the French as well as the English troops returned home from Egypt blinded with the ophthalmia of that arid soil. Some of the young men in Lucille's town, who had joined Napoleon's army, came back darkened by that fearful affliction, and Lucille's alms, and Lucille's aid, and Lucille's sweet voice, were ever at hand for those poor sufferers, whose common misfortune touched so thrilling a chord of her heart.

Her father was now dead, and she had only her mother to cheer amidst the ills of age. As one evening they sat at work together, Madame le Tisseur said, after a pause:

"I wish, dear Lucille, thou couldst be persuaded to marry Justin; he loves thee well, and now that thou art yet young, and hast many years before thee, thou shouldst remember that when I die thou wilt be alone."

"Ah, cease, dearest mother, I never can marry now; and as for love—once taught in the bitter school in which I have learned the knowledge of myself—I cannot be deceived again."

"My Lucille, you do not know yourself: never was woman loved if Justin does not love you; and never did lover feel with more real warmth how worthily he loved."

And this was true; and not of Justin alone, for Lucille's modest virtues, her kindly temper, and a certain undulating and feminine grace, which accompanied all her movements, had secured her as many conquests as if she had been beautiful. She had rejected all offers of marriage with a shudder; without even the throb of a flattered vanity. One memory, sadder, was also dearer, to her than all things;

and something sacred in its recollections made her deem it even a crime to think of effacing the past by a new affection.

"I believe," continued Madame le Tisseur, angrily, "that thou still thinkest fondly of him from whom only in the world thou couldst have experienced ingratitude."

"Nay, mother," said Lucille, with a blush and a slight sigh, "Eugene is married to another."

While thus conversing, they heard a gentle and timid knock at the door—the latch was lifted. "This," said the rough voice of a *commissionaire* of the town, "this, monsieur, is the house of *Madame le Tisseur*, and *voilà mademoiselle!*" A tall figure, with a shade over his eyes, and wrapped in a long military cloak, stood in the room. A thrill shot across Lucille's heart. He stretched out his arms. "Lucille," said that melancholy voice, which had made the music of her first youth—"where art thou, Lucille? Alas! she does not recognise St. Amand."

Thus was it indeed. By a singular fatality, the burning suns and the sharp dust of the plains of Egypt had smitten the young soldier, in the flush of his career, with a second—and this time, with an irremediable—blindness! He had returned to France to find his hearth lonely: Julie was no more—a sudden fever had cut her off in the midst of youth; and he had sought his way to Lucille's house, to see if one hope yet remained to him in the world!

And when, days afterwards, humbly and sadly he re-urged a former suit, did Lucille shut her heart to its prayer? Did her pride remember its wound—did she revert to his desertion—did she reply to the whisper of her yearning love, "*Thou hast been before forsaken*"? That voice, and those darkened eyes, plead to her with a pathos not to be resisted; "I am once more necessary to him," was all her thought—"if I reject him who will tend him?"

In that thought was the motive of her conduct; in that thought gushed back upon her soul all the springs of checked but unconquered, unconquerable love! In that thought, she stood beside him at the altar, and pledged,

with a yet holier devotion than she might have felt of yore, the vow of her imperishable truth.

And Lucille found, in the future, a reward, which the common world could never comprehend. With his blindness returned all the feelings she had first awakened in St. Amand's solitary heart; again he yearned for her step—again he missed even a moment's absence from his side—again her voice chased the shadow from his brow—and in her presence was a sense of shelter and of sunshine. He no longer sighed for the blessing he had lost; he reconciled himself to fate, and entered into that serenity of mood which mostly characterizes the blind. Perhaps after we have seen the actual world, and experienced its hollow pleasures, we can resign ourselves the better to its exclusion; and as the cloister, which repels the ardour of our hope, is sweet to our remembrance, so the darkness loses its terror when experience has wearied us with the glare and travail of the day. It was something, too, as they advanced in life, to feel the chains that bound him to Lucille strengthening daily, and to cherish in his overflowing heart the sweetness of increasing gratitude; it was something that he could not see years wrinkle that open brow, or dim the tenderness of that touching smile;—it was something that to him she was beyond the reach of time, and preserved to the verge of a grave (which received them both within a few days of each other) in all the bloom of her unwithering affection—in all the freshness of a heart that never could grow old!

Gertrude, who had broken in upon Trevylyan's story by a thousand anxious interruptions, and a thousand pretty apologies for interrupting, was charmed with a tale in which true love was made happy at last, although she did not forgive St. Amand his ingratitude, and although she declared, with a critical shake of the head, that "it was very unnatural that the mere beauty of Julie, or the mere want of it in Lucille, should have produced such an effect upon him, if he had ever *really* loved Lucille in his blindness."

As they passed through Malines, the town assumed an interest in Gertrude's eyes to which it scarcely of itself was entitled. She looked wistfully at the broad market-place; at a corner of which was one of those out-of-door groups of quiet and noiseless revellers, which Dutch art has raised from the Familiar to the Picturesque; and then glancing to the tower of St. Rembauld, she fancied, amidst the silence of noon, that she yet heard the plaintive cry of the blind orphan—"Fido, Fido, why hast thou deserted me?"

CHAPTER V.

ROTTERDAM.—THE CHARACTER OF THE DUTCH.—THEIR RESEMBLANCE TO THE GERMANS.—A DISPUTE BETWEEN VANE AND TREVYLYAN, AFTER THE MANNER OF THE ANCIENT NOVELISTS, AS TO WHICH IS PREFERABLE, THE LIFE OF ACTION OR THE LIFE OF REPOSE.—TREVYLYAN'S CONTRAST BETWEEN LITERARY AMBITION AND THE AMBITION OF PUBLIC LIFE.

Our travellers arrived at Rotterdam on a bright and sunny day. There is a cheerfulness about the operations of Commerce—a life—a bustle—an action which always exhilarate the spirits at the first glance. Afterwards they fatigue us; we get too soon behind the scenes, and find the base and troublous passions which move the puppets and conduct the drama.

But Gertrude, in whom ill health had not destroyed the vividness of impression that belongs to the inexperienced, was delighted at the cheeriness of all around her. As she leaned lightly on Trevylyan's arm, he listened with a forgetful joy to her questions and exclamations at the stir and liveliness of a city from which was to commence their pilgrimage along the Rhine. And indeed the scene was rife with the spirit of that people at once so active and so patient—so daring on the sea—so cautious on the land. Industry was visible everywhere; the vessels in the harbour—the

crowded boat putting off to land—the throng on the quay, all looked bustling and spoke of commerce. The city itself, on which the skies shone fairly through light and fleecy clouds, wore a cheerful aspect. The church of St. Lawrence rising above the clean, neat houses, and on one side, trees thickly grouped, gaily contrasted at once the waters and the city.

"I like this place," said Gertrude's father, quietly; "it has an air of comfort."

"And an absence of grandeur," said Trevylyan.

"A commercial people are one great middle class in their habits and train of mind," replied Vane; "and grandeur belongs to the extremes,—an impoverished population and a wealthy despot."

They went to see the statue of Erasmus, and the house in which he was born. Vane had a certain admiration for Erasmus which his companions did not share; he liked the quiet irony of the sage, and his knowledge of the world; and, besides, Vane was of that time of life when philosophers become objects of interest. At first they are teachers; secondly, friends; and it is only a few who arrive at the third stage, and find them deceivers. The Dutch are a singular people. Their literature is neglected, but it has some of the German vein in its strata,—the patience, the learning, the homely delineation, and even some traces of the mixture of the humorous and the terrible which form that genius for the grotesque so especially German,—you find this in their legends and ghost-stories. But in Holland activity destroys, in Germany indolence nourishes, romance.

They stayed a day or two at Rotterdam, and then proceeded up the Rhine to Gorcum. The banks were flat and tame, and nothing could be less impressive of its native majesty than this part of the course of the great river.

"I never felt before," whispered Gertrude, tenderly, "how much there was of consolation in your presence; for here I am at last on the Rhine—the blue Rhine, and how disappointed I should be if you were not by my side!"

"But, my Gertrude, you must wait till we have passed Cologne, before *the glories* of the Rhine burst upon you."

"It reverses life, my child," said the moralizing Vane; "and the stream flows through dulness at first, reserving its poetry for our perseverance."

"I will not allow your doctrine," said Trevylyan, as the ambitious ardor of his native disposition stirred within him. "Life has always action; it is our own fault if it ever be dull: youth has its enterprise, manhood its schemes; and even if infirmity creep upon age, the mind, the mind still triumphs over the mortal clay, and in the quiet hermitage, among books, and from thoughts, keeps the great wheel within everlastingly in motion. No, the better class of spirits have always an antidote to the insipidity of a common career, they have ever energy at will——"

"And never happiness!" answered Vane, after a pause, as he gazed on the proud countenance of Trevylyan, with that kind of calm, half-pitying interest which belonged to a character deeply imbued with the philosophy of a sad experience acting upon an unimpassioned heart. "And in truth, Trevylyan, it would please me if I could but teach you the folly of preferring the exercise of that energy of which you speak to the golden luxuries of REST. What ambition can ever bring an adequate reward? Not, surely, the ambition of letters—the desire of intellectual renown!"

"True," said Trevylyan, quietly; "that dream I have long renounced; there is nothing palpable in literary fame —it scarcely perhaps soothes the vain, it assuredly chafes the proud. In my earlier years I attempted some works which gained what the world, perhaps rightly, deemed a sufficient meed of reputation; yet it was not sufficient to recompense myself for the fresh hours I had consumed, for the sacrifices of pleasure I had made. The subtle aims that had inspired me were not perceived; the thoughts that had seemed new and beautiful to me, fell flat and lustreless on the soul of others. If I was approved, it was often for

what I condemned myself; and I found that the trite commonplace and the false wit charmed, while the truth fatigued, and the enthusiasm revolted. For men of that genius to which I make no pretension, who have dwelt apart in the obscurity of their own thoughts, gazing upon stars that shine not for the dull sleepers of the world, it must be a keen sting to find the product of their labour confounded with a class, and to be mingled up in men's judgment with the faults or merits of a tribe. Every great genius must deem himself original and alone in his conceptions. It is not enough for him that these conceptions should be approved as good, unless they are admitted as inventive, if they mix him with the herd he has shunned, not separate him in fame as he has been separated in soul. Some Frenchman, the oracle of his circle, said of the poet of the *Phêdre*, 'Racine and the other imitators of Corneille;' and Racine, in his wrath, nearly forswore tragedy for ever. It is in vain to tell the author that the public is the judge of his works. The author believes himself above the public, or he would never have written, and," continued Trevylyan, with enthusiasm, "he *is* above them; their fiat may crush his glory but never his self-esteem. He stands alone and haughty amidst the wrecks of the temple he imagined he had raised 'TO THE FUTURE,' and retaliates neglect with scorn. But is this, the life of scorn, a pleasurable state of existence? Is it one to be cherished? Does even the moment of fame counterbalance the years of mortification? And what is there in literary fame itself present and palpable to its heir? His work is a pebble thrown into the deep; the stir lasts for a moment, and the wave closes up, to be susceptible no more to the same impression. The circle may widen to other lands and other ages, but around *him* it is weak and faint. The trifles of the day, the low politics, the base intrigues, occupy the tongue, and fill the thought of his contemporaries; he is less known than a mountebank, or a new dancer; his glory comes not home to him; it brings no present, no perpetual reward, like the

applauses that wait the actor, or the actor-like mummer of the senate; and this which vexes, also lowers him; his noble nature begins to nourish the base vices of jealousy, and the unwillingness to admire. Goldsmith is forgotten in the presence of a puppet; he feels it, and is mean; he expresses it, and is ludicrous. It is well to say that great minds will not stoop to jealousy; in the greatest minds, it is most frequent.[1] Few authors are ever so aware of the admiration they excite as to afford to be generous; and this melancholy truth revolts us with our own ambition. Shall we be demigods in our closets at the price of sinking below mortality in the world? No! it was from this deep sentiment of the unrealness of literary fame, of dissatisfaction at the fruits it produced, of fear for the meanness it engendered, that I resigned betimes all love for its career; and if by the restless desire that haunts men who think much, to write ever, I should be urged hereafter to literature, I will sternly teach myself to persevere in the indifference to its fame."

"You say as I would say," answered Vane, with his tranquil smile; "and your experience corroborates my theory. Ambition, then, is not the root of happiness. Why more in action than in letters?"

"Because," said Trevylyan, "in action we commonly gain in our life all the honour we deserve: the public judge of men better and more rapidly than of books. And he who takes to himself in action a high and pure ambition, associates it with so many objects, that, unlike literature, the failure of one is balanced by the success of the other. He, the creator of deeds, not resembling the creator of books, stands not alone; he is eminently social; he has many comrades, and without their aid he could not accom-

[1] See the long list of names furnished by Disraeli, in that most exquisite work, *The Literary Character*, vol. ii. p. 75. Plato, Xenophon, Chaucer, Corneille, Voltaire, Dryden, the Caracci, Domenico Venetiano, murdered by his envious friend, and the gentle Castillo fainting away at the genius of Murillo.

plish his designs. This divides and mitigates the impatient jealousy against others. He works for a cause, and knows early that he cannot monopolize its whole glory; he shares what he is aware it is impossible to engross. Besides, action leaves him no time for brooding over disappointment. The author has consumed his youth in a work, —it fails in glory. Can he write another work? Bid him call back another youth! But in action, the labour of the mind is from day to day. A week replaces what a week has lost, and all the aspirant's fame is of the present. It is lipped by the Babel of the living world; he is ever on the stage, and the spectators are ever ready to applaud. Thus perpetually in the service of others self ceases to be his world; he has no leisure to brood over real or imaginary wrongs, the excitement whirls on the machine till it is worn out——"

"And kicked aside," said Vane, "with the broken lumber of men's other tools, in the chamber of their son's forgetfulness. Your man of action lasts but for an hour; the man of letters lasts for ages."

"We live not for ages," answered Trevylyan; "our life is on earth, and not in the grave."

"But even grant," continued Vane, "and I for one will concede the point, that posthumous fame is not worth the living agonies that obtain it, how are you better off in your poor and vulgar career of action? Would you assist the rulers?—servility! The people?—folly! If you take the great philosophical view which the worshippers of the past rarely take, but which, unknown to them, is their sole excuse, viz., that the changes which *may* benefit the future unsettle the present; and that it is not the wisdom of practical legislation to risk the peace of our contemporaries in the hope of obtaining happiness for their posterity—to what suspicions, to what charges are you exposed! You are deemed the foe of all liberal opinion and you read your curses in the eyes of a nation. But take the side of the people. What caprice—what ingratitude! You have pro-

fessed so much in theory, that you can never accomplish sufficient in practice. Moderation becomes a crime; to be prudent is to be perfidious. New demagogues, without temperance, because without principle, outstrip you in the moment of your greatest services. The public is the grave of a great man's deeds; it is never sated; its maw is eternally open; it perpetually craves for more. Where, in the history of the world, do you find the gratitude of a people? You find fervour, it is true, but not gratitude; the fervour that exaggerates a benefit at one moment, but not the gratitude that remembers it the next year. Once disappoint them, and all your actions, all your sacrifices, are swept from their remembrance for ever; they break the windows of the very house they have given you, and melt down their medals into bullets. Who serves man, ruler or peasant, serves the ungrateful; and all the ambitious are but types of a Wolsey or a De Witt."

"And what," said Trevylyan, "consoles a man in the ills that flesh is heir to, in that state of obscure repose, that serene inactivity to which you would confine him? Is it not his conscience? Is it not his self-acquittal, or his self-approval?"

"Doubtless," replied Vane.

"Be it so," answered the high-souled Trevylyan; "the same consolation awaits us in action as in repose. We sedulously pursue what we deem to be true glory. We are maligned; but our soul acquits us. Could it do more in the scandal and the prejudice that assail us in private life? You are silent; but note how much deeper should be the comfort, how much loftier the self-esteem; for if calumny attack us in a wilful obscurity, what have we done to refute the calumny? How have we served our species? Have we 'scorned delight and loved laborious days'? Have we made the utmost of the 'talent' confided to our care? Have we done those good deeds to our race upon which we can retire,—an 'Estate of Beneficence,'—from the malice of the world, and feel that our deeds are our defenders?

This is the consolation of virtuous actions; is it so of—even a virtuous—indolence?"

"You speak as a preacher," said Vane; "I merely as a calculator. You of virtue in affliction, I of a life in ease."

"Well, then, if the consciousness of perpetual endeavor to advance our race be not alone happier than the life of ease, let us see what this vaunted ease really is. Tell me, is it not another name for *ennui?* This state of quiescence, this objectless, dreamless torpor, this transition *du lit à la table, de la table au lit;* what more dreary and monotonous existence can you devise? Is it pleasure in this inglorious existence to think that you are serving pleasure? Is it freedom to be the slave to self? For I hold," continued Trevylyan, "that this jargon of 'consulting happiness,' this cant of living for ourselves, is but a mean as well as a false philosophy. Why this eternal reference to self? Is self alone to be consulted? Is even our happiness, did it truly consist in repose, really the great end of life? I doubt if we cannot ascend higher. I doubt if we cannot say with a great moralist, 'if virtue be not estimable in itself, we can see nothing estimable in following it for the sake of a bargain.' But, in fact, repose is the poorest of all delusions; the very act of recurring to self brings about us all those ills of self from which, in the turmoil of the world, we can escape. We become hypochondriacs. Our very health grows an object of painful possession. We are so desirous to be well (for what is retirement without health?) that we are ever fancying ourselves ill; and, like the man in the *Spectator*, we weigh ourselves daily, and live but by grains and scruples. Retirement is happy only for the poet, for to him it is *not* retirement. He secedes from one world but to gain another, and he finds not *ennui* in seclusion: why?—not because seclusion hath *repose*, but because it hath *occupation*. In one word, then, I say of action and of indolence, grant the same ills to both, and to action there is the readier escape or the nobler consolation."

Vane shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, my dear friend,"

said he, tapping his snuff-box with benevolent superiority, "you are much younger than I am!"

But these conversations, which Trevylyan and Vane often held together, dull as I fear this specimen must seem to the reader, had an inexpressible charm for Gertrude. She loved the lofty and generous vein of philosophy which Trevylyan embraced, and which, while it suited his ardent nature, contrasted a demeanour commonly hard and cold to all but herself. And young and tender as she was, his ambition infused its spirit into her fine imagination, and that passion for enterprise which belongs inseparably to romance. She loved to muse over his future lot, and in fancy to share its toils and to exult in its triumphs. And if sometimes she asked herself whether a career of action might not estrange him from her, she had but to turn her gaze upon his watchful eye,—and lo, he was by her side or at her feet!

CHAPTER VI.

GORCUM.—THE TOUR OF THE VIRTUES: A PHILOSOPHER'S TALE.

It was a bright and cheery morning as they glided by Gorcum. The boats pulling to the shore full of fishermen and peasants in their national costume; the breeze freshly rippling the waters; the lightness of the blue sky; the loud and laughing voices from the boats;—all contributed to raise the spirit, and fill it with that indescribable gladness which is the physical sense of life.

The tower of the church, with its long windows and its round dial, rose against the clear sky; and on a bench under a green bush facing the water sat a jolly Hollander, refreshing the breezes with the fumes of his national weed.

"How little it requires to make a journey pleasant, when the companions are our friends!" said Gertrude, as they

sailed along. "Nothing can be duller than these banks, nothing more delightful than this voyage."

"Yet what tries the affections of people for each other so severely as a journey together?" said Vane. "That perpetual companionship from which there is no escaping; that confinement, in all our moments of ill-humour and listlessness, with persons who want us to look amused—ah, it is a severe ordeal for friendship to pass through! A post-chaise must have jolted many an intimacy to death."

"You speak feelingly, dear father," said Gertrude, laughing; "and, I suspect, with a slight desire to be sarcastic upon us. Yet, seriously, I should think that travel must be like life, and that good persons must be always agreeable companions to each other."

"Good persons, my Gertrude!" answered Vane, with a smile. "Alas! I fear the good weary each other quite as much as the bad. What say you, Trevylyan,—would Virtue be a pleasant companion from Paris to Petersburg? Ah, I see you intend to be on Gertrude's side of the question. Well, now, if I tell you a story, since stories are so much the fashion with you, in which you shall find that the Virtues themselves actually made the experiment of a tour, will you promise to attend to the moral?"

"Oh, dear father, anything for a story," cried Gertrude; "especially from you who have not told us one all the way. Come, listen, Albert; nay, listen to your new rival."

And, pleased to see the vivacity of the invalid, Vane began as follows:

THE TOUR OF THE VIRTUES.

A PHILOSOPHER'S TALE.

Once upon a time, several of the Virtues, weary of living for ever with the Bishop of Norwich, resolved to make a little excursion; accordingly, though they knew everything on earth was very ill prepared to receive them, they

thought they might safely venture on a tour from Westminster Bridge to Richmond. The day was fine, the wind in their favour, and as to entertainment,—why, there seemed, according to Gertrude, to be no possibility of any disagreement among the Virtues.

They took a boat at Westminster stairs, and just as they were about to push off, a poor woman, all in rags, with a child in her arms, implored their compassion. Charity put her hand into her reticule and took out a shilling. Justice, turning round to look after the luggage, saw the folly which Charity was about to commit. "Heavens!" cried Justice, siezing poor Charity by the arm, "what are you doing? Have you never read Political Economy? Don't you know that indiscriminate almsgiving is only the encouragement to Idleness, the mother of Vice? You a Virtue, indeed! I'm ashamed of you. Get along with you, good woman;—yet stay, there is a ticket for soup at the Mendicity Society; they'll see if you're a proper object of compassion." But Charity is quicker than Justice, and slipping her hand behind her, the poor woman got the shilling and the ticket for soup too. Economy and Generosity saw the double gift. "What waste!" cried Economy, frowning; "what! a ticket and a shilling? *either* would have sufficed."

"Either!" said Generosity, "fie! Charity should have given the poor creature half-a-crown, and Justice a dozen tickets!" So the next ten minutes were consumed in a quarrel between the four Virtues, which would have lasted all the way to Richmond, if Courage had not advised them to get on shore and fight it out. Upon this, the Virtues suddenly perceived they had a little forgotten themselves, and Generosity offering the first apology, they made it up, and went on very agreeably for the next mile or two.

The day now grew a little overcast, and a shower seemed at hand. Prudence, who had on a new bonnet, suggested the propriety of putting to shore for half an hour; Courage was for braving the rain; but, as most of the Virtues are ladies, Prudence carried it. Just as they were about to

land, another boat cut in before them very uncivilly, and gave theirs such a shake that Charity was all but overboard. The company on board the uncivil boat, who evidently thought the Virtues extremely low persons, for they had nothing very fashionable about their exterior, burst out laughing at Charity's discomposure, especially as a large basket full of buns, which Charity carried with her for any hungry-looking children she might encounter at Richmond, fell pounce into the water. Courage was all on fire; he twisted his moustache, and would have made an onset on the enemy, if, to his great indignation, Meekness had not forestalled him, by stepping mildly into the hostile boat and offering both cheeks to the foe. This was too much even for the incivility of the boatman; they made their excuses to the Virtues, and Courage, who is no bully, thought himself bound discontentedly to accept them. But oh! if you had seen how Courage used Meekness afterwards, you could not have believed it possible that one Virtue could be so enraged with another. This quarrel between the two threw a damp on the party; and they proceeded on their voyage, when the shower was over, with anything but cordiality. I spare you the little squabbles that took place in the general conversation—how Economy found fault with all the villas by the way; and Temperance expressed becoming indignation at the luxuries of the City barge. They arrived at Richmond, and Temperance was appointed to order the dinner; meanwhile Hospitality, walking in the garden, fell in with a large party of Irishmen, and asked them to join the repast.

Imagine the long faces of Economy and Prudence, when they saw the addition to the company! Hospitality was all spirits; he rubbed his hands and called for champagne with the tone of a younger brother. Temperance soon grew scandalised, and Modesty herself coloured at some of the jokes; but Hospitality, who was now half seas over, called the one a milksop, and swore at the other as a prude. Away went the hours; it was time to return, and they

made down to the water-side thoroughly out of temper with one another, Economy and Generosity quarrelling all the way about the bill and the waiters. To make up the sum of their mortification, they passed a boat where all the company were in the best possible spirits, laughing and whooping like mad; and discovered these jolly companions to be two or three agreeable Vices, who had put themselves under the management of Good Temper. So you see, Gertrude, that even the Virtues may fall at loggerheads with each other, and pass a very sad time of it, if they happen to be of opposite dispositions, and have forgotten to take Good Temper with them."

"Ah!" said Gertrude, "but you have overloaded your boat; too many Virtues might contradict one another, but not a few."

"*Voilà ce que je veux dire,*" said Vane. "But listen to the sequel of my tale, which now takes a new moral."

At the end of the voyage, and after a long, sulky silence, Prudence said, with a thoughtful air, "My dear friends, I have been thinking that as long as we keep so entirely together, never mixing with the rest of the world, we shall waste our lives in quarrelling amongst ourselves and run the risk of being still less liked and sought after than we already are. You know that we are none of us popular; every one is quite contented to see us represented in a vaudeville, or described in an essay. Charity, indeed, has her name often taken in vain, at a bazaar or a subscription; and the miser as often talks of the duty he owes to *me*, when he sends the stranger from his door or his grandson to gaol: but still we only resemble so many wild beasts, whom everybody likes to see but nobody cares to possess. Now, I propose that we should all separate and take up our abode with some mortal or other for a year, with the power of changing at the end of that time should we not feel ourselves comfortable; that is, should we not find that we do all the good we intend: let us try the experiment, and on this day twelvemonths let us all meet, under the largest

oak in Windsor Forest, and recount what has befallen us." Prudence ceased, as she always does when she has said enough; and, delighted at the project, the Virtues agreed to adopt it on the spot. They were enchanted at the idea of setting up for themselves, and each not doubting his or her success; for Economy in her heart thought Generosity no Virtue at all, and Meekness looked on Courage as little better than a heathen.

Generosity, being the most eager and active of all the Virtues, set off first on his journey. Justice followed, and kept up with him, though at a more even pace. Charity never heard a sigh, or saw a squalid face, but she stayed to cheer and console the sufferer;—a kindness which somewhat retarded her progress.

Courage espied a travelling carriage, with a man and his wife in it quarrelling most conjugally, and he civilly begged he might be permitted to occupy the vacant seat opposite the lady. Economy still lingered, inquiring for the cheapest inns. Poor Modesty looked round and sighed, on finding herself so near to London, where she was almost wholly unknown; but resolved to bend her course thither for two reasons: first, for the novelty of the thing; and, secondly, not liking to expose herself to any risks by a journey on the Continent. Prudence, though the first to project, was the last to execute; and therefore resolved to remain where she was for that night, and take daylight for her travels.

The year rolled on, and the Virtues, punctual to the appointment, met under the oak-tree; they all came nearly at the same time, excepting Economy, who had got into a return post-chaise, the horses to which, having been forty miles in the course of the morning, had foundered by the way, and retarded her journey till night set in. The Virtues looked sad and sorrowful, as people are wont to do after a long and fruitless journey; and, somehow or other, such was the wearing effect of their intercourse with the world, that they appeared wonderfully diminished in size.

"Ah, my dear Generosity," said Prudence with a sigh, "as you were the first to set out on your travels, pray let us hear your adventures first."

"You must know, my dear sisters," said Generosity, "that I had not gone many miles from you before I came to a small country town, in which a marching regiment was quartered, and at an open window I beheld, leaning over a gentleman's chair, the most beautiful creature imagination ever pictured; her eyes shone out like two suns of perfect happiness, and she was almost cheerful enough to have passed for Good Temper herself. The gentleman over whose chair she leaned was her husband; they had been married six weeks; he was a lieutenant with a hundred pounds a-year besides his pay. Greatly affected by their poverty, I instantly determined, without a second thought, to ensconce myself in the heart of this charming girl. During the first hour in my new residence I made many wise reflections such as—that Love never was so perfect as when accompanied by Poverty; what a vulgar error it was to call the unmarried state 'Single *Blessedness;*' how wrong it was of us Virtues never to have tried the marriage bond; and what a falsehood it was to say that husbands neglected their wives, for never was there anything in nature so devoted as the love of a husband—six weeks married!

"The next morning, before breakfast, as the charming Fanny was waiting for her husband, who had not yet finished his toilet, a poor, wretched-looking object appeared at the window, tearing her hair and wringing her hands; her husband had that morning been dragged to prison, and her seven children had fought for the last mouldy crust. Prompted by me, Fanny, without inquiring further into the matter, drew from her silken purse a five-pound note, and gave it to the beggar, who departed more amazed than grateful. Soon after the lieutenant appeared,—'What the d—l, another bill!' muttered he, as he tore the yellow wafer from a large, square, folded, bluish piece of paper. 'Oh, ah! confound the fellow, *he* must be paid. I must

trouble you, Fanny, for fifteen pounds to pay this saddler's bill.'

"'Fifteen pounds, love?' stammered Fanny, blushing.

"'Yes, dearest, the fifteen pounds I gave you yesterday.'

"'I have only ten pounds,' said Fanny, hesitatingly; 'for such a poor, wretched-looking creature was here just now, that I was obliged to give her five pounds.'

"'Five pounds? good Heavens!' exclaimed the astonished husband; 'I shall have no more money this three weeks.' He frowned, he bit his lips, nay, he even wrung his hands, and walked up and down the room; worse still, he broke forth with—'Surely, madam, you did not suppose, when you married a lieutenant in a marching regiment, that he could afford to indulge in the whim of giving five pounds to every mendicant who held out her hand to you? You did not, I say, madam, imagine—' but the bridegroom was interrupted by the convulsive sobs of his wife: it was their first quarrel, they were but six weeks married; he looked at her for one moment sternly, the next he was at her feet. 'Forgive me, dearest Fanny,—forgive me, for I cannot forgive myself. I was too great a wretch to say what I did; and do believe, my own Fanny, that while I may be too poor to indulge you in it, I do from my heart admire so noble, so disinterested, a generosity.' Not a little proud did I feel to have been the cause of this exemplary husband's admiration for his amiable wife, and sincerely did I rejoice at having taken up my abode with these *poor* people. But not to tire you, my dear sisters, with the minutiæ of detail, I shall briefly say that things did not long remain in this delightful position; for, before many months had elapsed, poor Fanny had to bear with her husband's increased and more frequent storms of passion, unfollowed by any halcyon and honeymoon suings for forgiveness: for at my instigation every shilling went; and when there were no more to go, her trinkets, and even her clothes followed. The lieutenant became a complete brute, and even allowed his unbridled tongue to call me—me, sisters, *me!*—'heart-

less Extravagance.' His despicable brother-officers and their gossiping wives were no better; for they did nothing but animadvert upon my Fanny's ostentation and absurdity, for by such names had they the impertinence to call *me*. Thus grieved to the soul to find myself the cause of all poor Fanny's misfortunes, I resolved at the end of the year to leave her, being thoroughly convinced that, however amiable and praiseworthy I might be in myself, I was totally unfit to be bosom friend and adviser to the wife of a lieutenant in a marching regiment, with only a hundred pounds a-year besides his pay."

The Virtues groaned their sympathy with the unfortunate Fanny; and Prudence, turning to Justice, said, "I long to hear what you have been doing, for I am certain you cannot have occasioned harm to any one."

Justice shook her head and said, "Alas! I find that there are times and places when even I do better not to appear, as a short account of my adventures will prove to you. No sooner had I left you than I instantly repaired to India, and took up my abode with a Brahmin. I was much shocked by the dreadful inequalities of condition that reigned in the several castes, and I longed to relieve the poor Pariah from his ignominous destiny,—accordingly I set seriously to work on reform. I insisted upon the iniquity of abandoning men from their birth to an irremediable state of contempt, from which no virtue could exalt them. The Brahmins looked upon *my* Brahmin with ineffable horror. They called *me* the most wicked of vices; they saw no distinction between Justice and Atheism. I uprooted their society—that was sufficient crime. But the worst was, that the Pariahs themselves regarded me with suspicion; they thought it unnatural in a Brahmin to care for a Pariah! And one called me 'Madness'; another, 'Ambition'; and a third, 'The Desire to innovate.' My poor Brahmin led a miserable life of it; when one day, after observing, at my dictation, that he thought a Pariah's life as much entitled to respect as a cow's, he was hurried

away by the priests and secretly broiled on the altar as a fitting reward for his sacrilege. I fled hither in great tribulation, persuaded that in some countries even Justice may do harm."

"As for me," said Charity, not waiting to be asked, "I grieve to say that I was silly enough to take up my abode with an old lady in Dublin, who never knew what discretion was, and always acted from impulse; my instigation was irresistible, and the money she gave in her drives through the suburbs of Dublin was so lavishly spent that it kept all the rascals of the city in idleness and whisky. I found, to my great horror, that I was a main cause of a terrible epidemic, and that to give alms without discretion was to spread poverty without help. I left the city when my year was out, and as ill-luck would have it, just at the time when I was most wanted."

"And oh," cried Hospitality, "I went to Ireland also. I fixed my abode with a squireen; I ruined him in a year, and only left him because he had no longer a hovel to keep me in."

"As for myself," said Temperance, "I entered the breast of an English legislator, and he brought in a bill against ale-houses; the consequence was, that the labourers took to gin, and I have been forced to confess that Temperance may be too zealous when she dictates too vehemently to others."

"Well," said Courage, keeping more in the background than he had ever done before, and looking rather ashamed of himself, "that travelling carriage I got into belonged to a German general and his wife, who were returning to their own country. Growing very cold as we proceeded, she wrapped me up in a *polonaise;* but the cold increasing, I inadvertently crept into her bosom; once there I could not get out, and from thenceforward the poor general had considerably the worse of it. She became so provoking, that I wondered how he could refrain from an explosion. To do him justice, he did at last threaten to get out of the car-

riage; upon which, roused by me, she collared him—and conquered. When he got to his own district things grew worse, for if any aide-de-camp offended her she insisted that he might be publicly reprimanded; and should the poor general refuse she would with her own hands confer a caning upon the delinquent. The additional force she had gained in me was too much odds against the poor general, and he died of a broken heart, six months after my *liaison* with his wife. She after this became so dreaded and detested, that a conspiracy was formed to poison her; *this* daunted even me, so I left her without delay,—*et me voici!*"

"Humph," said Meekness, with an air of triumph, "I, at least, have been more successful than you. On seeing much in the papers of the cruelties practised by the Turks on the Greeks, I thought my presence would enable the poor sufferers to bear their misfortunes calmly. I went to Greece, then, at a moment when a well-planned and practicable scheme of emancipating themselves from the Turkish yoke was arousing their youth. Without confining myself to one individual, I flitted from breast to breast; I meekened the whole nation; my remonstrances against the insurrection succeeded, and I had the satisfaction of leaving a whole people ready to be killed or strangled with the most Christian resignation in the world."

The Virtues, who had been a little cheered by the opening self-complacence of Meekness, would not, to her great astonishment, allow that she had succeeded a whit more happily than her sisters, and called next upon Modesty for her confession.

"You know," said that amiable young lady, "that I went to London in search of a situation. I spent three months of the twelve in going from house to house, but I could not get a single person to receive me. The ladies declared that they never saw so old-fashioned a gawkey, and civilly recommended me to their abigails; the abigails turned me round with a stare, and then pushed me down to the kitchen and the fat scullion-maids; who assured me

that 'in the respectable families they had the honour to live in, they had never even heard of my name.' One young housemaid, just from the country, did indeed receive me with some sort of civility; but she very soon lost me in the servants' hall. I now took refuge with the other sex, as the least uncourteous. I was fortunate enough to find a young gentleman of remarkable talents, who welcomed me with open arms. He was full of learning, gentleness, and honesty. I had only one rival—Ambition. We both contended for an absolute empire over him. Whatever Ambition suggested, I damped. Did Ambition urge him to begin a book, I persuaded him it was not worth publication. Did he get up, full of knowledge, and instigated by my rival to make a speech (for he was in parliament), I shocked him with the sense of his assurance—I made his voice droop and his accents falter. At last, with an indignant sigh, my rival left him; he retired into the country, took orders, and renounced a career he had fondly hoped would be serviceable to others; but finding I did not suffice for his happiness, and piqued at his melancholy, I left him before the end of the year, and he has since taken to drinking!"

The eyes of the Virtues were all turned to Prudence. She was their last hope—"I am just where I set out," said that discreet Virtue; "I have done neither good nor harm. To avoid temptation I went and lived with a hermit to whom I soon found that I could be of no use beyond warning him not to overboil his peas and lentils, not to leave his door open when a storm threatened, and not to fill his pitcher too full at the neighbouring spring. I am thus the only one of you that never did harm; but only because I am the only one of you that never had an opportunity of doing it! In a word," continued Prudence, thoughtfully, —"in a word, my friends, circumstances are necessary to the Virtues themselves. Had, for instance, Economy changed with Generosity, and gone to the poor lieutenant's wife, and had I lodged with the Irish squireen instead of Hospitality, what misfortunes would have been saved to

both! Alas! I perceive we lose all our efficacy when we are misplaced; and *then*, though in reality Virtues, we operate as Vices. Circumstances must be favourable to our exertions, and harmonious with our nature; and we lose our very divinity unless Wisdom direct our footsteps to the home we should inhabit and the dispositions we should govern."

The story was ended, and the travellers began to dispute about its moral. Here let us leave them.

CHAPTER VII.

COLOGNE.—THE TRACES OF THE ROMAN YOKE.—THE CHURCH OF ST. MARIA.—TREVYLYAN'S REFLECTIONS ON THE MONASTIC LIFE.—THE TOMB OF THE THREE KINGS.—AN EVENING EXCURSION ON THE RHINE.

Rome—magnificent Rome! wherever the pilgrim wends, the traces of thy dominion greet his eyes. Still in the heart of the bold German race is graven the print of the eagle's claws; and amidst the haunted regions of the Rhine we pause to wonder at the great monuments of the Italian yoke.

At Cologne our travellers rested for some days. They were in the city to which the camp of Marcus Agrippa had given birth: that spot had resounded with the armed tread of the legions of Trajan. In that city, Vitellius, Sylvanus, were proclaimed emperors. By that church did the latter receive his death.

As they passed round the door they saw some peasants loitering on the sacred ground; and when they noted the delicate cheek of Gertrude they uttered their salutations with more than common respect. Where they then were the building swept round in a circular form; and at its base it is supposed by tradition to retain something of the ancient Roman masonry. Just before them rose the spire of a plain

and unadorned church—singularly contrasting the pomp of the old with the simplicity of the innovating creed.

The Church of St. Maria occupies the site of the Roman Capitol; and the place retains the Roman name; and still something in the aspect of the people betrays the hereditary blood.

Gertrude, whose nature was strongly impressed with *the venerating character*, was fond of visiting the old Gothic churches, which, with so eloquent a moral, unite the living with the dead.

"Pause for a moment," said Trevylyan, before they entered the church of St. Mary. "What recollections crowd upon us! On the site of the Roman Capitol a Christian church and a convent are erected! By whom? The mother of Charles Martel—the Conqueror of the Saracen—the arch-hero of Christendom itself! And to these scenes and calm retreats, to the cloisters of the convent once belonging to this church, fled the bruised spirit of a royal sufferer—the victim of Richelieu—the unfortunate and ambitious Mary de Medicis. Alas! the cell and the convent are but a vain emblem of that desire to fly to God which belongs to Distress; the solitude soothes, but the monotony recalls, regret. And for my own part, in my frequent tours through Catholic countries, I never saw the still walls in which monastic vanity hoped to shut out the world, but a melancholy came over me! What hearts at war with themselves! —what unceasing regrets!—what pinings after the past!—what long and beautiful years devoted to a moral grave, by a momentary rashness—an impulse—a disappointment! But in these churches the lesson is more impressive and less sad. The weary heart has ceased to ache—the burning pulses are still—the troubled spirit has flown to the only rest which is not a deceit. Power and love—hope and fear —avarice—ambition, they are quenched at last! Death is the only monastery—the tomb is the only cell."

"Your passion is ever for active life," said Gertrude. "You allow no charm to solitude, and contemplation to you

seems torture. If any great sorrow ever come upon you, you will never retire to seclusion as its balm. You will plunge into the world, and lose your individual existence in the universal rush of life."

"Ah, talk not of sorrow!" said Trevylyan, wildly,—"let us enter the church."

They went afterwards to the celebrated cathedral, which is considered one of the noblest of the architectural triumphs of Germany; but it is yet more worthy of notice from the Pilgrim of Romance than the searcher after antiquity, for here, behind the grand altar, is the Tomb of the Three Kings of Cologne--the three worshippers whom tradition humbled to our Saviour. Legend is rife with a thousand tales of the relics of this tomb. The Three Kings of Cologne are the tutelary names of that golden superstition which has often more votaries than the religion itself from which it springs: and to Gertrude the simple story of Lucille sufficed to make her for the moment credulous of the sanctity of the spot. Behind the tomb three Gothic windows cast their "dim, religious light" over the tesselated pavement and along the Ionic pillars. They found some of the more credulous believers in the authenticity of the relics kneeling before the tomb, and they arrested their steps, fearful to disturb the superstition which is never without something of sanctity when contented with prayer and forgetful of persecution. The bones of the Magi are still supposed to consecrate the tomb, and on the higher part of the monument the artist has delineated their adoration to the infant Saviour.

That evening came on with a still and tranquil beauty, and as the sun hastened to its close they launched their boat for an hour or two's excursion upon the Rhine. Gertrude was in that happy mood when the quiet of nature is enjoyed like a bath for the soul, and the presence of him she so idolised deepened that stillness into a more delicious and subduing calm. Little did she dream as the boat glided over the water, and the towers of Cologne rose in the blue

air of evening, how few were those hours that divided her from the tomb! But, in looking back to the life of one we have loved, how dear is the thought that the latter days were the days of light, that the cloud never chilled the beauty of the setting sun, and that if the years of existence were brief, all that existence has most tender, most sacred, was crowded into that space! Nothing dark, then, or bitter, rests with our remembrance of the lost: *we* are the mourners, but pity is not for the mourned—our grief is purely selfish; when we turn to its object, the hues of happiness are round it, and that very love which is the parent of our woe was the consolation—the triumph—of the departed!

The majestic Rhine was calm as a lake; the splashing of the oar only broke the stillness, and after a long pause in their conversation, Gertrude, putting her hand on Trevylyan's arm, reminded him of a promised story: for he, too, had moods of abstraction, from which, in her turn, she loved to lure him; and his voice to her had become a sort of want.

"Let it be," said she, "a tale suited to the hour; no fierce tradition—nay, no grotesque fable, but of the tenderer dye of superstition. Let it be of love, of woman's love—of the love that defies the grave: for surely even after death it lives; and Heaven would scarcely be Heaven if memory were banished from its blessings."

"I recollect," said Trevylyan, after a slight pause, "a short German legend, the simplicity of which touched me much when I heard it; but," added he with a slight smile, "so much more faithful appears in the legend the love of the woman than that of the man, that *I* at least ought scarcely to recite it."

"Nay," said Gertrude, tenderly, "the fault of the inconstant only heightens our gratitude to the faithful."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOUL IN PURGATORY; OR, LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH.

THE angels strung their harps in Heaven, and their music went up like a stream of odours to the pavilions of the Most High. But the harp of Seralim was sweeter than that of his fellows, and the Voice of the Invisible One (for the angels themselves know not the glories of Jehovah—only far in the depths of Heaven they see one Unsleeping Eye watching for ever over Creation) was heard saying:

"Ask a gift for the love that burns in thy song, and it shall be given thee." And Seralim answered:

"There is in that place which men call Purgatory, and which is the escape from Hell, but the painful porch of Heaven, many souls that adore Thee, and yet are punished justly for their sins; grant me the boon to visit them at times, and solace their suffering by the hymns of the harp that is consecrated to Thee!"

And the Voice answered:

"Thy prayer is heard, O gentlest of the angels! and it seems good to Him who chastises but from love. Go! Thou hast thy will."

Then the angel sang the praises of God; and when the song was done he rose from his azure throne at the right hand of Gabriel, and, spreading his rainbow wings, he flew to that melancholy orb which, nearest to earth, echoes with the shrieks of souls that by torture become pure. There the unhappy ones see from afar the bright courts they are hereafter to obtain, and the shapes of glorious beings, who, fresh from the Fountains of Immortality, walk amidst the gardens of Paradise, and feel that their happiness hath no morrow;—and this thought consoles amidst their torments, and makes the true difference between Purgatory and Hell.

Then the angel folded his wings, and entering the crystal

gates, sat down upon a blasted rock and struck his divine lyre, and a peace fell over the wretched; the demon ceased to torture and the victim to wail. As sleep to the mourners of earth was the song of the angel to the souls of the purifying star: one only voice amidst the general stillness seemed not lulled by the angel; it was the voice of a woman, and it continued to cry out with a sharp cry:

"Oh, Adenheim, Adenheim! mourn not for the lost!"

The angel struck chord after chord, till his most skilful melodies were exhausted; but still the solitary voice, unheeding—unconscious of—the sweetest harp of the angel choir, cried out:

"Oh, Adenheim, Adenheim! mourn not for the lost!"

Then Seralim's interest was aroused, and approaching the spot whence the voice came, he saw the spirit of a young and beautiful girl chained to a rock, and the demons lying idly by. And Seralim said to the demons, "Doth the song lull ye thus to rest?"

And they answered, "Her care for another is bitterer than all our torments; therefore are we idle."

Then the angel approached the spirit, and said in a voice which stilled her cry—for in what state do we outlive sympathy? "Wherefore, O daughter of earth! wherefore wailest thou with the same plaintive wail? and why doth the harp that soothes the most guilty of thy companions, fail in its melody with thee?"

"Oh, radiant stranger," answered the poor spirit; "thou speakest to one who on earth loved God's creature more than God; therefore is she thus justly sentenced. But I know that my poor Adenheim mourns ceaselessly for me, and the thought of his sorrow is more intolerable to me than all that the demons can inflict."

"And how knowest thou that he laments thee?" asked the angel.

"Because I know with what agony I should have mourned for *him*," replied the spirit, simply.

The divine nature of the angel was touched; for love is

the nature of the sons of heaven. "And how," said he, "can I minister to thy sorrow?"

A transport seemed to agitate the spirit, and she lifted up her mistlike and impalpable arms, and cried:

"Give me—oh, give me to return to earth, but for one little hour, that I may visit my Adenheim; and that, concealing from him my present sufferings, I may comfort him in his own."

"Alas!" said the angel, turning away his eyes—for angels may not weep in the sight of others—"I could, indeed, grant thee this boon, but thou knowest not the penalty. For the souls in Purgatory may return to Earth, but heavy is the sentence that awaits their return. In a word, for one hour on earth thou must add a thousand years to the torture of thy confinement here!"

"Is that all?" cried the spirit; "willingly then will I brave the doom. Ah, surely they love not in heaven, or thou wouldst know, O Celestial Visitant, that one hour of consolation to the one we love is worth a thousand ages of torture to ourselves! Let me comfort and convince my Adenheim; no matter what becomes of me."

Then the Angel looked on high, and he saw in far distant regions, which in that orb none else could discern, the rays that parted from the all-guarding Eye; and heard the Voice of the Eternal One bidding him act as his pity whispered. He looked on the spirit and her shadowy arms stretched pleadingly towards him; he uttered the word that loosens the bars of the gate of Purgatory; and lo, the spirit had re-entered the human world.

It was night in the halls of the Lord of Adenheim, and he sat at the head of his glittering board; loud and long was the laugh, and merry the jest that echoed round; and the laugh and the jest of the Lord of Adenheim were louder and merrier than all.

And by his right side sat a beautiful lady; and ever and anon he turned from others to whisper soft vows in her ear.

"And oh," said the bright dame of Falkenberg, "thy

words what ladye can believe?—Didst thou not utter the same oaths, and promise the same love, to Ida, the fair daughter of Loden, and now but three little months have closed upon her grave?"

"By my halidom," quoth the young Lord of Adenheim, "thou dost thy beauty marvellous injustice. Ida! Nay, thou mockest me; *I* love the daughter of Loden! why, how then should I be worthy thee? A few gay words, a few passing smiles—behold all the love Adenheim ever bore to Ida. Was it my fault if the poor fool misconstrued such common courtesy? Nay, dearest lady, this heart is virgin to thee."

"And what!" said the lady of Falkenberg, as she suffered the arm of Adenheim to encircle her slender waist, "didst thou not grieve for her loss?"

"Why, verily, yes, for the first week; but in thy bright eyes I found ready consolation."

At this moment, the Lord of Adenheim thought he heard a deep sigh behind him; he turned, but saw nothing, save a slight mist that gradually faded away, and vanished in the distance. Where was the necessity for Ida to reveal herself?

* * * * *

"And thou didst not, then, do thine errand to thy lover?" said Seralim, as the spirit of the wronged Ida returned to Purgatory.

"Bid the demons recommence their torture," was poor Ida's answer.

"And was it for this that thou added a thousand years to thy doom?"

"Alas!" answered Ida, "after the single hour I have endured on Earth, there seems to be but little terrible in a thousand fresh years of Purgatory!" [1]

[1] This story is principally borrowed from a foreign soil. It seemed to the author worthy of being transferred to an English one, although he fears that much of its singular beauty in the original has been lost by the way.

"What! is the story ended?" asked Gertrude.

"Yes."

"Nay, surely the thousand years were not added to poor Ida's doom; and Seralim bore her back with him to Heaven?"

"The legend saith no more. The writer was contented to show us the perpetuity of woman's love—"

"And its reward," added Vane.

"It was not *I* who drew that last conclusion, Albert," whispered Gertrude.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCENERY OF THE RHINE ANALOGOUS TO THE GERMAN LITERARY GENIUS—THE DRACHENFELS.

On leaving Cologne, the stream winds round among banks that do not yet fulfil the promise of the Rhine; but they increase in interest as you leave Surdt and Godorf. The peculiar character of the river does not, however, really appear, until by degrees the Seven Mountains, and "The castled Crag of Drachenfels" above them all, break upon the eye. Around Nieder Cassel and Rheidt the vines lie thick and clustering: and, by the shore, you see from place to place the islands stretching their green length along, and breaking the exulting tide. Village rises upon village, and viewed from the distance as you sail, the pastoral errors that enamoured us of the village life crowd thick and fast upon us. So still do these hamlets seem, so sheltered from the passions of the world; as if the passions were not like winds—only felt where they breathe, and invisible save by their effects! Leaping into the broad bosom of the Rhine come many a stream and rivulet upon either side. Spire upon spire rises and sinks as you sail on. Mountain and city—and solitary island—the castled steep—like the

dreams of ambition, suddenly appear, proudly swell, and dimly fade away.

"You begin now," said Trevylyan, "to understand the character of the German literature. The Rhine is an emblem of its luxuriance, its fertility, its romance. The best commentary to the German genius is a visit to the German scenery. The mighty gloom of the Hartz, the feudal towers that look over vines and deep valleys on the legendary Rhine; the gigantic remains of antique power, profusely scattered over plain, mount, and forest; the thousand mixed recollections that hallow the ground; the stately Roman, the stalwart Goth, the chivalry of the feudal age, and the dim brotherhood of the ideal world, have here alike their record and their remembrance. And over such scenes wanders the young German student. Instead of the pomp and luxury of the English traveller, the thousand devices to cheat the way, he has but his volume in his hand, his knapsack at his back. From such scenes he draws and hives all that various store which after years ripen to invention. Hence the florid mixture of the German muse—the classic, the romantic, the contemplative, the philosophic, and the superstitious: each the result of actual meditation over different scenes: each the produce of separate but confused recollections. As the Rhine flows, so flows the national genius, by mountain and valley—the wildest solitude—the sudden spires of ancient cities—the mouldered castle—the stately monastery—the humble cot. Grandeur and homeliness, history and superstition, truth and fable, succeeding one another so as to blend into a whole.

"But," added Trevylyan a moment afterwards, "the Ideal is passing slowly away from the German mind, a spirit for the more active and the more material literature is springing up amongst them. The revolution of mind gathers on, preceding stormy events; and the memories that led their grandsires to contemplate, will urge the youth of the next generation to dare and to act." [1]

[1] Is not this prediction already fulfilled?—1849.

Thus conversing, they continued their voyage, with a fair wave and beneath a lucid sky.

The vessel now glided beside the Seven Mountains and the Drachenfels.

The sun slowly setting cast his yellow beams over the smooth waters. At the foot of the mountains lay a village deeply sequestered in shade; and above, the Ruin of the Drachenfels caught the richest beams of the sun. Yet thus alone, though lofty, the ray cheered not the gloom that hung over the giant rock: it stood on high, like some great name on which the light of glory may shine, but which is associated with a certain melancholy, from the solitude to which its very height above the level of the herd condemned its owner!

CHAPTER X.

THE LEGEND OF ROLAND.—THE ADVENTURES OF NYMPHALIN ON THE ISLAND OF NONNWERTH.—HER SONG.—THE DECAY OF THE FAIRY-FAITH IN ENGLAND.

On the shore opposite the Drachenfels stand the Ruins of Rolandseck,—they are the shattered crown of a lofty and perpendicular mountain, consecrated to the memory of the brave Roland; below, the trees of an island to which the lady of Roland retired, rise thick and verdant from the smooth tide.

Nothing can exceed the eloquent and wild grandeur of the whole scene. That spot is the pride and beauty of the Rhine.

The legend that consecrates the tower and the island is briefly told; it belongs to a class so common to the Romaunts of Germany. Roland goes to the wars. A false report of his death reaches his betrothed. She retires to the convent in the isle of Nonnewërth, and takes the irrevocable veil. Roland returns home, flushed with glory and hope, to find that the very fidelity of his affianced had

placed an eternal barrier between them. He built the castle that bears his name, and which overlooks the monastery, and dwelt there till his death; happy in the power at least to gaze, even to the last, upon those walls which held the treasure he had lost.

The willows droop in mournful luxuriance along the island, and harmonise with the memory that, through the desert of a thousand years, love still keeps green and fresh. Nor hath it permitted even those additions of fiction which, like mosses, gather by time over the truth that they adorn, yet adorning conceal, to mar the simple tenderness of the legend.

All was still in the island of Nonnewërth; the lights shone through the trees from the house that contained our travellers. On one smooth spot where the islet shelves into the Rhine met the wandering fairies.

"Oh, Pipalee! how beautiful!" cried Nymphalin, as she stood enraptured by the wave; a star-beam shining on her, with her yellow hair "dancing its ringlets in the whistling wind." "For the first time since our departure I do not miss the green fields of England."

"Hist!" said Pipalee under her breath; "I hear fairy steps—they must be the steps of strangers."

"Let us retreat into this thicket of weeds," said Nymphalin, somewhat alarmed; "the good lord-treasurer is already asleep there." They whisked into what to them was a forest, for the reeds were two feet high, and there sure enough they found the lord-treasurer stretched beneath a bulrush, with his pipe beside him, for since he had been in Germany he had taken to smoking; and indeed wild thyme, properly dried, makes very good tobacco for a fairy. They also found Nip and Trip sitting very close together; Nip playing with her hair, which was exceedingly beautiful.

"What do you do here?" said Pipalee, shortly; for she was rather an old maid, and did not like fairies to be too close to each other.

"Watching my lord's slumber," said Nip.

"Pshaw!" said Pipalee.

"Nay," quoth Trip, blushing like a sea-shell; "there is no harm in *that*, I'm sure."

"Hush!" said the queen, peeping through the reeds.

And now forth from the green bosom of the earth came a tiny train; slowly, two by two, hand in hand, they swept from a small aperture, shadowed with fragrant herbs, and formed themselves into a ring: then came other fairies, laden with dainties, and presently two beautiful white mushrooms sprang up, on which the viands were placed, and lo, there was a banquet! Oh, how merry they were! what gentle peals of laughter, loud as a virgin's sigh! what jests! what songs! Happy race! if mortals could see you as often as I do, in the soft nights of summer, they would never be at a loss for entertainment. But as our English fairies looked on, they saw that these foreign elves were of a different race than themselves: they were taller and less handsome, their hair was darker, they wore moustaches, and had something of a fiercer air. Poor Nymphalin was a little frightened; but presently soft music was heard floating along, something like the sound we suddenly hear of a still night when a light breeze steals through rushes, or wakes a ripple in some shallow brook dancing over pebbles. And lo, from the aperture of the earth came forth a fay, superbly dressed, and of a noble presence. The queen started back, Pipalee rubbed her eyes, Trip looked over Pipalee's shoulder, and Nip, pinching her arm, cried out amazed, "By the last new star, that is Prince von Fayzenheim!"

Poor Nymphalin gazed again, and her little heart beat under her bee's-wing bodice as if it would break. The prince had a melancholy air, and he sat apart from the banquet gazing abstractedly on the Rhine.

"Ah!" whispered Nymphalin to herself, "does he think of me?"

Presently the prince drew forth a little flute hollowed from a small reed, and began to play a mournful air.

Nymphalin listened with delight; it was one he had learned in her dominions.

When the air was over, the prince rose, and approaching the banqueters, despatched them on different errands; one to visit the dwarf of the Drachenfels, another to look after the grave of Musæus, and a whole detachment to puzzle the students of Heidelberg. A few launched themselves upon willow leaves on the Rhine, to cruise about in the starlight, and another band set out a hunting after the grey-legged moth. The prince was left alone; and now Nymphalin, seeing the coast clear, wrapped herself up in a cloak made out of a withered leaf;—and only letting her eyes glow out from the hood, she glided from the reeds, and the prince turning round, saw a dark fairy figure by his side. He drew back, a little startled, and placed his hand on his sword, when Nymphalin, circling round him, sang the following words:

THE FAIRY'S REPROACH.

I.

"By the glow-worm's lamp in the dewy brake;
By the gossamer's airy net;
By the shifting skin of the faithless snake;
Oh, teach me to forget,
For none, ah none
Can teach so well that human spell
As Thou, false one!

II.

"By the fairy dance on the greensward smooth;
By the winds of the gentle west;
By the loving stars, when their soft looks soothe
The waves on their mother's breast;
Teach me thy lore!
By which, like withered flowers,
The leaves of buried Hours
Blossom no more!

III.

"By the tent in the violet's bell;
By the may on the scented bough;
By the lone green isle where my sisters dwell;
And thine own forgotten vow;
Teach me to live,
Nor feed on thoughts that pine
For love so false as thine!
—Teach me thy lore,
And one thou lov'st no more
Will bless thee and forgive!"

"Surely," said Fayzenheim, faltering, "surely I know that voice!"

And Nymphalin's cloak dropped off her shoulder. "My English fairy!" and Fayzenheim knelt beside her.

I wish you had seen the fay kneel, for you would have sworn it was so like a human lover that you would never have sneered at love afterwards. Love is so fairy-like a part of us, that even a fairy cannot make it differently from us,—that is to say, when we love truly.

There was great joy in the island that night among the elves. They conducted Nymphalin to their palace within the earth, and feasted her sumptuously; and Nip told their adventures with so much spirit, that he enchanted the merry foreigners. But Fayzenheim talked apart to Nymphalin, and told her how he was lord of that island, and how he had been obliged to return to his dominions by the law of his tribe, which allowed him to be absent only a certain time in every year. "But, my queen, I always intended to revisit thee next spring."

"Thou need'st not have left us so abruptly," said Nymphalin, blushing.

"But do *thou* never leave me!" said the ardent fairy; "be mine, and let our nuptials be celebrated on these shores. Wouldst thou sigh for thy green island? No! for *there* the fairy altars are deserted, the faith is gone from the land; thou art among the last of an unhonoured and expiring race. Thy mortal poets are dumb, and Fancy, which was thy

priestess, sleeps hushed in her last repose. New and hard creeds have succeeded to the fairy lore. Who steals through the starlit boughs on the nights of June to watch the roundels of thy tribe? The wheels of commerce, the din of trade, have silenced to mortal ear the music of thy subjects' harps! And the noisy habitations of men, harsher than their dreaming sires, are gathering round the dell and vale where thy co-mates linger: a few years, and where will be the green solitudes of England?"

The queen sighed, and the prince, perceiving that he was listened to, continued:

"Who, in thy native shores, among the children of men, now claims the fairy's care? What cradle wouldst thou tend? On what maid wouldst thou shower thy rosy gifts? What bard wouldst thou haunt in his dreams? Poesy is fled the island, why shouldst thou linger behind? Time hath brought dull customs, that laugh at thy gentle being. Puck is buried in the harebell, he hath left no offspring, and none mourn for his loss; for night, which is the fairy season, is busy and garish as the day. What hearth is desolate after the curfew? What house bathed in stillness at the hour in which thy revels commence? Thine empire among men hath passed from thee, and thy race are vanishing from the crowded soil. For, despite our diviner nature, our existence is linked with man's. Their neglect is our disease, their forgetfulness our death. Leave then those dull, yet troubled scenes, that are closing round the fairy rings of thy native isle. These mountains, this herbage, these gliding waves, these mouldering ruins, these starred rivulets, be they, O beautiful fairy! thy new domain. Yet in these lands our worship lingers; still can we fill the thought of the young bard, and mingle with his yearnings after the Beautiful, the Unseen. Hither come the pilgrims of the world, anxious only to gather from these scenes the legends of Us; ages will pass away ere the Rhine shall be desecrated of our haunting presence. Come then, my queen, let this palace be thine own, and the moon that

glances over the shattered towers of the Dragon Rock witness our nuptials and our vows!"

In such words the fairy prince courted the young queen, and while she sighed at their truth she yielded to their charm. Oh! still may there be one spot on the earth where the fairy feet may press the legendary soil—still be there one land where the faith of The Bright Invisible hallows and inspires! Still glide thou, O majestic and solemn Rhine, among shades and valleys, from which the wisdom of belief can call the creations of the younger world!

CHAPTER XI.

WHEREIN THE READER IS MADE SPECTATOR WITH THE ENGLISH FAIRIES OF THE SCENES AND BEINGS THAT ARE BENEATH THE EARTH.

During the heat of next day's noon, Fayzenheim took the English visitors through the cool caverns that wind amidst the mountains of the Rhine. There, a thousand wonders awaited the eyes of the fairy queen. I speak not of the Gothic arch and aisle into which the hollow earth forms itself, or the stream that rushes with a mighty voice through the dark chasm, or the silver columns that shoot aloft, worked by the gnomes from the mines of the mountains of Taunus; but of the strange inhabitants that from time to time they came upon. They found in one solitary cell, lined with dried moss, two misshapen elves, of a larger size than common, with a plebeian working-day aspect, who were chatting noisily together, and making a pair of boots: these were the Hausmannen or domestic elves, that dance into tradesmen's houses of a night, and play all sorts of undignified tricks. They were very civil to the queen, for they are good-natured creatures on the whole, and once had many relations in Scotland. They then, following the course of a noisy rivulet, came to a hole from which the

sharp head of a fox peeped out. The queen was frightened. "Oh, come on," said the fox, encouragingly, "I am one of the fairy race, and many are the gambols we of the brute-elves play in the German world of romance." "Indeed, Mr. Fox," said the prince, "you only speak the truth; and how is Mr. Bruin?" "Quite well, my prince; but tired of his seclusion, for indeed our race can do little or nothing now in the world; and lie here in our old age, telling stories of the past, and recalling the exploits we did in our youth; which, madam, you may see in all the fairy histories in the prince's library."

"Your own love adventures, for instance, Master Fox," said the prince.

The fox snarled angrily, and drew in his head.

"You have displeased your friend," said Nymphalin.

"Yes—he likes no allusions to the amorous follies of his youth. Did you ever hear of his rivalry with the dog for the cat's good graces?"

"No—that must be very amusing."

"Well, my queen, when we rest by and by, I will relate to you the history of the fox's wooing."

The next place they came to was a vast Runic cavern, covered with dark inscriptions of a forgotten tongue; and sitting on a huge stone they found a dwarf with long yellow hair, his head leaning on his breast, and absorbed in meditation.

"This is a spirit of a wise and powerful race," whispered Fayzenheim, "that has often battled with the fairies; but he is of the kindly tribe."

Then the dwarf lifted his head with a mournful air; and gazed upon the bright shapes before him, lighted by the pine-torches that the prince's attendants carried.

"And what dost thou muse upon, O descendant of the race of Laurin?" said the prince.

"Upon TIME!" answered the dwarf gloomily. "I see a River, and its waves are black, flowing from the clouds, and none knoweth its source. It rolls deeply on, aye

and evermore, through a green valley, which it slowly swallows up, washing away tower and town, and vanquishing all things; and the name of the River is TIME."

Then the dwarf's head sank on his bosom, and he spoke no more.

The fairies proceeded:—"Above us," said the prince, "rises one of the loftiest mountains of the Rhine; for mountains are the Dwarf's home. When the Great Spirit of all made earth, he saw that the hollows of the rocks and hills were tenantless; and yet, that a mighty kingdom and great palaces were hid within them; a dread and dark solitude: but lighted at times from the starry eyes of many jewels; and there was the treasure of the human world—gold and silver—and great heaps of gems, and a soil of metals. So God made a race for this vast empire, and gifted them with the power of thought, and the soul of exceeding wisdom; so that they want not the merriment and enterprise of the outer world: but musing in these dark caves is their delight. Their existence rolls away in the luxury of thought; only from time to time they appear in the world, and betoken woe or weal to men; according to their nature—for they are divided into two tribes, the benevolent and the wrathful." While the prince spoke, they saw glaring upon them from a ledge in the upper rock a grisly face with a long matted beard. The prince gathered himself up, and frowned at the evil dwarf, for such it was; but with a wild laugh the face abruptly disappeared, and the echo of the laugh rang with a ghastly sound through the long hollows of the earth.

The queen clung to Fayzenheim's arm. "Fear not, my queen," said he; "the evil race have no power over our light and aërial nature: with men only they war; and he whom we have seen was, in the old ages of the world, one of the deadliest visitors to mankind."

But now they came winding by a passage to a beautiful recess in the mountain empire; it was of a circular shape of amazing height; in the midst of it played a natural foun-

tain of sparkling waters, and around it were columns of massive granite, rising in countless vistas, till lost in the distant shade. Jewels were scattered round, and brightly played the fairy torches on the gem, the fountain, and the pale silver, that gleamed at frequent intervals from the rocks. "Here let us rest," said the gallant fairy, clapping his hands—"what, ho! music and the feast."

So the feast was spread by the fountain's side; and the courtiers scattered rose-leaves, which they had brought with them, for the prince and his visitor; and amidst the dark kingdom of the dwarfs broke the delicate sound of fairy lutes. "We have not these evil beings in England," said the queen, as low as she could speak; "they rouse my fear, but my interest also. Tell me, dear prince, of what nature was the intercourse of the evil dwarf with man?"

"You know," answered the prince, "that to every species of living thing there is something in common; the vast chain of sympathy runs through all creation. By that which they have in common with the beast of the field or the bird of the air, men govern the inferior tribes; they appeal to the common passions of fear and emulation when they tame the wild steed; to the common desire of greed and gain when they snare the fishes of the stream, or allure the wolves to the pitfall by the bleating of the lamb. In their turn, in the older ages of the world, it was by the passions which men had in common with the demon race that the fiends commanded or allured them. The dwarf whom you saw, being of that race which is characterised by the ambition of power and the desire of hoarding, appealed then in his intercourse with men to the same characteristics in their own bosoms; to ambition or to avarice. And thus were his victims made! But, not now, dearest Nymphalin," continued the prince, with a more lively air—"not now will we speak of those gloomy beings. Ho, there! cease the music, and come hither all of ye—to listen to a faithful and homely history of the Dog, the Cat, the Griffin, and the Fox."

CHAPTER XII.

THE WOOING OF MASTER FOX.[1]

You are aware, my dear Nymphalin, that in the time of which I am about to speak there was no particular enmity between the various species of brutes; the dog and the hare chatted very agreeably together, and all the world knows that the wolf, unacquainted with mutton, had a particular affection for the lamb. In these happy days, two most respectable cats, of very old family, had an only daughter. Never was kitten more amiable or more seducing; as she grew up she manifested so many charms, that in a little while she became noted as the greatest beauty in the neighbourhood. Need I to you, dearest Nymphalin, describe her perfection? Suffice it to say that her skin was of the most delicate tortoiseshell, that her paws were smoother than velvet, that her whiskers were twelve inches long at the least, and that her eyes had a gentleness altogether astonishing in a cat. But if the young beauty had suitors in plenty during the lives of monsieur and madame, you may suppose the number was not diminished when, at the age of two years and a half, she was left an orphan, and sole heiress to all the hereditary property. In fine, she was the richest marriage in the whole country. Without troubling you, dearest queen, with the adventures of the rest of her lovers, with their suit and their rejection, I come at once to

[1] In the excursions of the fairies, it is the object of the author to bring before the reader a rapid phantasmagoria of the various beings that belong to the German superstitions, so that the work may thus describe the outer and the inner world of the land of the Rhine. The tale of the Fox's Wooing has been composed to give the English reader an idea of a species of novel not naturalised amongst us, though frequent among the legends of our Irish neighbours; in which the brutes are the only characters drawn—drawn, too, with shades of distinction as nice and subtle as if they were the creatures of the civilised world.

the two rivals most sanguine of success—the dog and the fox.

Now the dog was a handsome, honest, straightforward, affectionate fellow. "For my part," said he, "I don't wonder at my cousin's refusing Bruin the bear, and Gauntgrim the wolf: to be sure they give themselves great airs, and call themselves '*noble*,' but what then? Bruin is always in the sulks, and Gauntgrim always in a passion; a cat of any sensibility would lead a miserable life with them. As for me, I am very good-tempered when I'm not put out, and I have no fault except that of being angry if disturbed at my meals. I am young and good-looking, fond of play and amusement, and altogether as agreeable a husband as a cat could find in a summer's day. If she marries me, well and good; she may have her property settled on herself:—if not, I shall bear her no malice; and I hope I sha'n't be too much in love to forget that there are other cats in the world."

With that the dog threw his tail over his back, and set off to his mistress with a gay face on the matter.

Now the fox heard the dog talking thus to himself—for the fox was always peeping about, in holes and corners, and he burst out a-laughing when the dog was out of sight.

"Ho, ho, my fine fellow!" said he; "not so fast, if you please: you've got the fox for a rival, let me tell you."

The fox, as you very well know, is a beast than can never do anything without a manœuvre; and as, from his cunning, he was generally very lucky in anything he undertook, he did not doubt for a moment that he should put the dog's nose out of joint. Reynard was aware that in love one should always, if possible, be the first in the field, and he therefore resolved to get the start of the dog and arrive before him at the cat's residence. But this was no easy matter; for though Reynard could run faster than the dog for a little way, he was no match for him in a journey of some distance. "However," said Reynard, "those good-natured creatures are never very wise; and I think I know already what will make him bait on his way."

With that, the fox trotted pretty fast by a short cut in the woods, and getting before the dog, laid himself down by a hole in the earth, and began to howl most piteously.

The dog, hearing the noise, was very much alarmed; "See now," said he, "if the poor fox has not got himself into some scrape! Those cunning creatures are always in mischief; thank Heaven, it never comes into my head to be cunning!" And the good-natured animal ran off as hard as he could to see what was the matter with the fox.

"Oh dear!" cried Reynard; "what shall I do? what shall I do? my poor little sister has fallen into this hole, and I can't get her out—she'll certainly be smothered." And the fox burst out a-howling more piteously than before.

"But, my dear Reynard," quoth the dog very simply, "why don't you go in after your sister?"

"Ah, you may well ask that," said the fox; "but, in trying to get in, don't you perceive that I have sprained my back and can't stir? Oh dear! what shall I do if my poor little sister is smothered!"

"Pray don't vex yourself," said the dog; "I'll get her out in an instant:" and with that he forced himself with great difficulty into the hole.

Now, no sooner did the fox see that the dog was fairly in, than he rolled a great stone to the mouth of the hole and fitted it so tight, that the dog, not being able to turn round and scratch against it with his fore-paws, was made a close prisoner.

"Ha! ha!" cried Reynard, laughing outside; "amuse yourself with my poor little sister, while I go and make your compliments to Mademoiselle the Cat."

With that Reynard set off at an easy pace, never troubling his head what became of the poor dog. When he arrived in the neighbourhood of the beautiful cat's mansion, he resolved to pay a visit to a friend of his, an old magpie that lived in a tree and was well acquainted with all the news of the place. "For," thought Reynard, "I may as

well know the blind side of my mistress that is to be, and get round it at once."

The magpie received the fox with great cordiality and inquired what brought him so great a distance from home.

"Upon my word," said the fox, "nothing so much as the pleasure of seeing your ladyship and hearing those agreeable anecdotes you tell with so charming a grace; but to let you into a secret—be sure it don't go farther——"

"On the word of a magpie," interrupted the bird.

"Pardon me for doubting you," continued the fox; "I should have recollected that a pie was a proverb for discretion. But, as I was saying, you know her majesty the lioness?"

"Surely," said the magpie, bridling.

"Well; she was pleased to fall in—that is to say—to—to—take a caprice to your humble servant, and the lion grew so jealous that I thought it prudent to decamp. A jealous lion is no joke, let me assure your ladyship. But mum's the word."

So great a piece of news delighted the magpie. She could not but repay it in kind, by all the news in her budget. She told the fox all the scandal about Bruin and Gauntgrim, and she then fell to work on the poor young cat. She did not spare her foibles, you may be quite sure. The fox listened with great attention, and he learned enough to convince him that, however much the magpie might exaggerate, the cat was very susceptible to flattery, and had a great deal of imagination.

When the magpie had finished, she said, "But it must be very unfortunate for you to be banished from so magnificent a court as that of the lion?"

"As to that," answered the fox, "I console myself for my exile with a present his majesty made me on parting, as a reward for my anxiety for his honour and domestic tranquillity; namely, three hairs from the fifth leg of the amoronthologosphorus. Only think of that, ma'am!"

"The what?" cried the pie, cocking down her left ear.

"The amoronthologosphorus."

"La!" said the magpie; "and what is that very long word, my dear Reynard?"

"The amoronthologosphorus is a beast that lives on the other side of the river Cylinx; it has five legs, and on the fifth leg there are three hairs, and whoever has those three hairs can be young and beautiful for ever."

"Bless me! I wish you would let me see them," said the pie, holding out her claw.

"Would that I could oblige you, ma'am; but it's as much as my life's worth to show them to any but the lady I marry. In fact, they only have an effect on the fair sex, as you may see by myself, whose poor person they utterly fail to improve: they are, therefore, intended for a marriage present, and his majesty the lion thus generously atoned to me for relinquishing the tenderness of his queen. One must confess that there was a great deal of delicacy in the gift. But you'll be sure not to mention it."

"A magpie gossip indeed!" quoth the old blab.

The fox then wished the magpie good night and retired to a hole to sleep off the fatigues of the day, before he presented himself to the beautiful young cat.

The next morning, Heaven knows how! it was all over the place that Reynard the fox had been banished from court for the favour shown him by her majesty, and that the lion had bribed his departure with three hairs that would make any lady whom the fox married young and beautiful for ever.

The cat was the first to learn the news, and she became all curiosity to see so interesting a stranger, possessed of "qualifications" which, in the language of the day, "would render any animal happy!" She was not long without obtaining her wish. As she was taking a walk in the wood the fox contrived to encounter her. You may be sure that he made her his best bow; and he flattered the poor cat with so courtly an air that she saw nothing surprising in the love of the lioness.

Meanwhile let us see what became of his rival, the dog.

"Ah, the poor creature!" said Nymphalin; "it is easy to guess that he need not be buried alive to lose all chance of marrying the heiress."

"Wait till the end," answered Fayzenheim. When the dog found that he was thus entrapped, he gave himself up for lost. In vain he kicked with his hind-legs against the stone—he only succeeded in bruising his paws; and at length he was forced to lie down, with his tongue out of his mouth, and quite exhausted. "However," said he, after he had taken breath, "it won't do to be starved here, without doing my best to escape; and if I can't get out one way, let me see if there is not a hole at the other end." Thus saying, his courage, which stood him in lieu of cunning, returned, and he proceeded on in the same straightforward way in which he always conducted himself. At first the path was exceedingly narrow, and he hurt his sides very much against the rough stones that projected from the earth. But by degrees the way became broader, and he now went on with considerable ease to himself, till he arrived in a large cavern, where he saw an immense griffin sitting on his tail, and smoking a huge pipe.

The dog was by no means pleased at meeting so suddenly a creature that had only to open his mouth to swallow him up at a morsel; however, he put a bold face on the danger, and walking respectfully up to the griffin, said: "Sir, I should be very much obliged to you if you would inform me the way out of these holes into the upper world."

The griffin took the pipe out of his mouth, and looked at the dog very sternly.

"Ho, wretch!" said he, "how comest thou hither? I suppose thou wantest to steal my treasure: but I know how to treat such vagabonds as you, and I shall certainly eat you up."

"You can do that if you choose," said the dog; "but it would be very unhandsome conduct in an animal so much bigger than myself. For my own part, I never attack any

dog that is not of equal size—I should be ashamed of myself if I did. And as to your treasure, the character I bear for honesty is too well known to merit such a suspicion."

"Upon my word," said the griffin, who could not help smiling for the life of him, "you have a singularly free mode of expressing yourself;—and how, I say, came you hither?"

Then the dog, who did not know what a lie was, told the griffin his whole history, how he had set off to pay his court to the cat, and how Reynard the fox had entrapped him into the hole.

When he had finished, the griffin said to him: "I see, my friend, that you know how to speak the truth; I am in want of just such a servant as you will make me, therefore stay with me and keep watch over my treasure when I sleep."

"Two words to that," said the dog. "You have hurt my feelings very much by suspecting my honesty, and I would much sooner go back into the wood and be avenged on that scoundrel the fox, than serve a master who has so ill an opinion of me. I pray you, therefore, to dismiss me, and to put me in the right way to my cousin the cat."

"I am not a griffin of many words," answered the master of the cavern, "and I give you your choice—be my servant or be my breakfast; it is just the same to me. I give you time to decide till I have smoked out my pipe."

The poor dog did not take so long to consider. "It is true," thought he, "that it is a great misfortune to live in a cave with a griffin of so unpleasant a countenance: but, probably, if I serve him well and faithfully, he'll take pity on me some day, and let me go back to earth, and prove to my cousin what a rogue the fox is; and as to the rest, though I would sell my life as dear as I could, it is impossible to fight a griffin with a mouth of so monstrous a size." In short, he decided to stay with the griffin.

"Shake a paw on it," quoth the grim smoker; and the dog shook paws.

"And now," said the griffin, "I will tell you what you are to do—look here;" and moving his tail, he showed the dog a great heap of gold and silver, in a hole in the ground, that he had covered with the folds of his tail; and also, what the dog thought more valuable, a great heap of bones of very tempting appearance.

"Now," said the griffin, "during the day I can take very good care of these myself; but at night it is very necessary that I should go to sleep: so when I sleep you must watch over them instead of me."

"Very well," said the dog. "As to the gold and silver, I have no objection; but I would much rather that you would lock up the bones, for I'm often hungry of a night, and——"

"Hold your tongue," said the griffin.

"But, sir," said the dog, after a short silence, "surely nobody ever comes into so retired a situation! Who are the thieves, if I may make bold to ask?"

"Know," answered the griffin, "that there are a great many serpents in this neighbourhood; they are always trying to steal my treasure; and if they catch me napping, they, they not contented with theft, would do their best to sting me to death. So that I am almost worn out for want of sleep."

"Ah!" quoth the dog, who was fond of a good night's rest, "I don't envy you your treasure, sir."

At night, the griffin, who had a great deal of penetration, and saw that he might depend on the dog, lay down to sleep in another corner of the cave; and the dog, shaking himself well, so as to be quite awake, took watch over the treasure. His mouth watered exceedingly at the bones, and he could not help smelling them now and then; but he said to himself: "A bargain's a bargain, and since I have promised to serve the griffin, I must serve him as an honest dog ought to serve."

In the middle of the night he saw a great snake creeping in by the side of the cave, but the dog set up so loud a bark

that the griffin awoke and the snake crept away as fast as he could. Then the griffin was very much pleased, and he gave the dog one of the bones to amuse himself with; and every night the dog watched the treasure, and acquitted himself so well that not a snake, at last, dared to make its appearance;—so the griffin enjoyed an excellent night's rest.

The dog now found himself much more comfortable than he expected. The griffin regularly gave him one of the bones for supper; and, pleased with his fidelity, made himself as agreeable a master as a griffin could be. Still, however, the dog was secretly very anxious to return to earth; for having nothing to do during the day but to doze on the ground, he dreamed perpetually of his cousin the cat's charms, and, in fancy, he gave the rascal Reynard as hearty a worry as a fox may well have the honour of receiving from a dog's paws. He awoke panting—alas! he could not realise his dreams.

One night, as he was watching as usual over the treasure, he was greatly surprised to see a beautiful little black and white dog enter the cave; and it came fawning to our honest friend, wagging its tail with pleasure.

"Ah! little one," said our dog, whom, to distinguish, I will call the watch-dog, "you had better make the best of your way back again. See, there is a great griffin asleep in the other corner of the cave, and if he wakes, he will either eat you up or make you his servant, as he has made me."

"I know what you would tell me," says the little dog; "and I have come down here to deliver you. The stone is now gone from the mouth of the cave, and you have nothing to do but to go back with me. Come, brother, come."

The dog was very much excited by this address. "Don't ask me, my dear little friend," said he; "you must be aware that I should be too happy to escape out of this cold cave, and roll on the soft turf once more: but if I leave my master, the griffin, those cursed serpents, who are always on the

watch, will come in and steal his treasure—nay, perhaps, sting him to death." Then the little dog came up to the watch-dog, and remonstrated with him greatly, and licked him caressingly on both sides of his face; and, taking him by the ear, endeavoured to draw him from the treasure: but the dog would not stir a step, though his heart sorely pressed him. At length the little dog, finding it all in vain, said, "Well, then, if I must leave, good-bye; but I have become so hungry in coming down all this way after you, that I wish you would give me one of those bones; they smell very pleasantly, and one out of so many could never be missed."

"Alas!" said the watch-dog, with tears in his eyes, "how unlucky I am to have eaten up the bone my master gave me, otherwise you should have had it and welcome. But I can't give you one of these, because my master has made me promise to watch over them all, and I have given him my paw on it. I am sure a dog of your respectable appearance will say nothing farther on the subject."

Then the little dog answered pettishly, "Pooh, what nonsense you talk! surely a great griffin can't miss a little bone fit for me?" and nestling his nose under the watch-dog, he tried forthwith to bring up one of the bones.

On this the watch-dog grew angry, and, though with much reluctance, he seized the little dog by the nape of the neck and threw him off, but without hurting him. Suddenly the little dog changed into a monstrous serpent, bigger even than the griffin himself, and the watch-dog barked with all his might. The griffin rose in a great hurry, and the serpent sprang upon him ere he was well awake. I wish, dearest Nymphalin, you could have seen the battle between the griffin and the serpent—how they coiled and twisted, and bit and darted their fiery tongues at each other. At length the serpent got uppermost, and was about to plunge his tongue into that part of the griffin which is unprotected by his scales, when the dog, seizing him by the tail, bit him so sharply, that he could not help turning

round to kill his new assailant, and the griffin, taking advantage of the opportunity, caught the serpent by the throat with both claws, and fairly strangled him. As soon as the griffin had recovered from the nervousness of the conflict, he heaped all manner of caresses on the dog for saving his life. The dog told him the whole story, and the griffin then explained, that the dead snake was the king of the serpents, who had the power to change himself into any shape he pleased. "If he had tempted you," said he, "to leave the treasure but for one moment, or to have given him any part of it, ay, but a single bone, he would have crushed you in an instant, and stung me to death ere I could have waked; but none, no, not the most venomous thing in creation, has power to hurt the honest!"

"That has always been my belief," answered the dog; "and now, sir, you had better go to sleep again and leave the rest to me."

"Nay," answered the griffin, "I have no longer need of a servant; for now that the king of the serpents is dead, the rest will never molest me. It was only to satisfy his avarice that his subjects dared to brave the den of the griffin."

Upon hearing this the dog was exceedingly delighted; and raising himself on his hind paws, he begged the griffin most movingly to let him return to earth, to visit his mistress the cat, and worry his rival the fox.

"You do not serve an ungrateful master," answered the griffin. "You shall return, and I will teach you all the craft of our race, which is much craftier than the race of that pettifogger the fox, so that you may be able to cope with your rival."

"Ah, excuse me," said the dog, hastily, "I am equally obliged to you: but I fancy honesty is a match for cunning any day; and I think myself a great deal safer in being a dog of honour than if I knew all the tricks in the world."

"Well," said the griffin, a little piqued at the dog's bluntness, "do as you please; I wish you all possible success."

Then the griffin opened a secret door in the side of the cabin, and the dog saw a broad path that led at once into the wood. He thanked the griffin with all his heart, and ran wagging his tail into the open moonlight. "Ah, ah! master fox," said he, "there's no trap for an honest dog that has not two doors to it, cunning as you think yourself."

With that he curled his tail gallantly over his left leg, and set off on a long trot to the cat's house. When he was within sight of it, he stopped to refresh himself by a pool of water, and who should be there but our friend the magpie.

"And what do *you* want, friend?" said she, rather disdainfully, for the dog looked somewhat out of case after his journey.

"I am going to see my cousin the cat," answered he.

"*Your* cousin! marry come up," said the magpie; "don't you know she is going to be married to Reynard the fox? This is not a time for her to receive the visits of a brute like you."

These words put the dog in such a passion, that he very nearly bit the magpie for her uncivil mode of communicating such bad news. However, he curbed his temper, and, without answering her, went at once to the cat's residence.

The cat was sitting at the window, and no sooner did the dog see her than he fairly lost his heart; never had he seen so charming a cat before; he advanced, wagging his tail, and with his most insinuating air; when the cat, getting up, clapped the window in his face—and lo! Reynard the fox appeared in her stead.

"Come out, thou rascal!" said the dog, showing his teeth; "come out, I challenge thee to single combat; I have not forgiven thy malice, and thou seest that I am no longer shut up in the cave, and unable to punish thee for thy wickedness."

"Go home, silly one!" answered the fox, sneering; "thou hast no business here, and as for fighting thee—bah!" Then the fox left the window and disappeared.

But the dog, thoroughly enraged, scratched lustily at the door, and made such a noise, that presently the cat herself came to the window.

"How now!" said she, angrily; "what means all this rudeness? Who are you, and what do you want at my house?"

"Oh, my dear cousin," said the dog, "do not speak so severely. Know that I have come here on purpose to pay you a visit; and, whatever you do, let me beseech you not to listen to that villain Reynard—you have no conception what a rogue he is!"

"What!" said the cat, blushing; "do you dare to abuse your betters in this fashion? I see you have a design on me. Go, this instant, or——"

"Enough, madam," said the dog, proudly; "you need not speak twice to me—farewell."

And he turned away very slowly, and went under a tree, where he took up his lodgings for the night. But the next morning there was an amazing commotion in the neighbourhood; a stranger, of a very different style of travelling from that of the dog, had arrived at the dead of the night, and fixed his abode in a large cavern hollowed out of a steep rock. The noise he had made in flying through the air was so great that it had awakened every bird and beast in the parish; and Reynard, whose bad conscience never suffered him to sleep very soundly, putting his head out of the window, perceived, to his great alarm, that the stranger was nothing less than a monstrous griffin.

Now the griffins are the richest beasts in the world; and that's the reason they keep so close under ground. Whenever it does happen that they pay a visit above, it is not a thing to be easily forgotten.

The magpie was all agitation,—what could the griffin possibly want there? She resolved to take a peep at the cavern, and, accordingly, she hopped timorously up the rock, and pretended to be picking up sticks for her nest.

"Holla, ma'am!" cried a very rough voice, and she saw

the griffin putting his head out of the cavern. "Holla! you are the very lady I want to see; you know all the people about here—eh?"

"All the best company, your lordship, I certainly do," answered the magpie, dropping a curtsey.

Upon this the griffin walked out; and smoking his pipe leisurely in the open air, in order to set the pie at her ease, continued:

"Are there any respectable beasts of good families settled in this neighbourhood?"

"Oh, most elegant society, I assure your lordship," cried the pie. "I have lived here myself these ten years, and the great heiress, the cat yonder, attracts a vast number of strangers."

"Humph—heiress, indeed! much *you* know about heiresses!" said the griffin. "There is only one heiress in the world, and that's my daughter."

"Bless me! has your lordship a family? I beg you a thousand pardons. But I only saw your lordship's own equipage last night, and did not know you brought any one with you."

"My daughter went first, and was safely lodged before I arrived. She did not disturb you, I dare say, as I did; for she sails along like a swan: but I have got the gout in my left claw, and that's the reason I puff and groan so in taking a journey."

"Shall I drop in upon Miss Griffin, and see how she is after her journey?" said the pie, advancing.

"I thank you, no. I don't intend her to be seen while I stay here—it unsettles her; and I'm afraid of the young beasts running away with her if they once heard how handsome she was: she's the living picture of me, but she's monstrous giddy! Not that I should care much if she did go off with a beast of degree, were I not obliged to pay her portion, which is prodigious; and I don't like parting with money, ma'am, when I've once got it. Ho, ho, ho!"

"You are too witty, my lord: But if you refused your

consent?" said the pie, anxious to know the whole family history of so grand a seigneur.

"I should have to pay the dowry all the same. It was left her by her uncle the dragon. But don't let this go any farther."

"Your lordship may depend on my secrecy. I wish your lordship a very good morning."

Away flew the pie, and she did not stop till she got to the cat's house. The cat and the fox were at breakfast, and the fox had his paw on his heart. "Beautiful scene!" cried the pie; the cat coloured, and bade the pie take a seat.

Then off went the pie's tongue, glib, glib, glib, chatter, chatter, chatter. She related to them the whole story of the griffin and his daughter, and a great deal more besides, that the griffin had never told her.

The cat listened attentively. Another young heiress in the neighbourhood might be a formidable rival. "But is his griffiness handsome?" said she.

"Handsome!" cried the pie; "oh! if you could have seen the father!—such a mouth, such eyes, such a complexion; and he declares she's the living picture of himself! But what do you say, Mr. Reynard? you, who have seen so much in the world, have, perhaps, seen the young lady?"

"Why, I can't say I have," answered the fox, waking from a reverie; "but she must be wonderfully rich. I dare say that fool the dog will be making up to her."

"Ah! by the way," said the pie, "what a fuss he made at your door yesterday; why would you not admit him, my dear?"

"Oh!" said the cat, demurely, "Mr. Reynard says that he is a dog of very bad character, quite a fortune-hunter; and hiding the most dangerous disposition to bite under an appearance of good nature. I hope he won't be quarrelsome with you, dear Reynard!"

"With me? O the poor wretch, no!—he might bluster a little; but he knows that if I'm once angry I'm a devil at biting;—one should not boast of oneself."

In the evening Reynard felt a strange desire to go and see the griffin smoking his pipe; but what could he do? There was the dog under the opposite tree evidently watching for him, and Reynard had no wish to prove himself that devil at biting which he declared he was. At last he resolved to have recourse to stratagem to get rid of the dog.

A young buck of a rabbit, a sort of provincial fop, had looked in upon his cousin the cat, to pay her his respects, and Reynard, taking him aside, said, "You see that shabby-looking dog under the tree? He has behaved very ill to your cousin the cat, and you certainly ought to challenge him—forgive my boldness—nothing but respect for your character induces me to take so great a liberty; you know I would chastise the rascal myself, but what a scandal it would make! If I were already married to your cousin, it would be a different thing. But you know what a story that cursed magpie would hatch out of it!"

The rabbit looked very foolish; he assured the fox he was no match for the dog; that he was very fond of his cousin, to be sure! but he saw no necessity to interfere with her domestic affairs;—and, in short, he tried all he possibly could to get out of the scrape; but the fox so artfully played on his vanity—so earnestly assured him that the dog was the biggest coward in the world and would make a humble apology, and so eloquently represented to him the glory he would obtain for manifesting so much spirit, that at length the rabbit was persuaded to go out and deliver the challenge.

"I'll be your second," said the fox; "and the great field on the other side the wood, two miles hence, shall be the place of battle: there we shall be out of observation. You go first, I'll follow in half an hour—and I say, hark!—in case he does accept the challenge, and you feel the least afraid, I'll be in the field, and take it off your paws with the utmost pleasure; rely on *me*, my dear sir!"

Away went the rabbit. The dog was a little astonished at the temerity of the poor creature; but on hearing that

the fox was to be present, willingly consented to repair to the place of conflict. This readiness the rabbit did not at all relish; he went very slowly to the field, and seeing no fox there, his heart misgave him, and while the dog was putting his nose to the ground to try if he could track the coming of the fox, the rabbit slipped into a burrow, and left the dog to walk back again.

Meanwhile the fox was already at the rock; he walked very soft-footedly, and looked about with extreme caution, for he had a vague notion that a griffin-papa would not be very civil to foxes.

Now there were two holes in the rock—one below, one above, an upper story and an under; and while the fox was peering about, he saw a great claw from the upper rock beckoning to him.

"Ah, ah!" said the fox, "that's the wanton young griffiness, I'll swear."

He approached, and a voice said:

"Charming Mr. Reynard! Do you not think you could deliver an unfortunate griffiness from a barbarous confinement in this rock?"

"Oh Heavens!" cried the fox, tenderly, "what a beautiful voice! and, ah, my poor heart, what a lovely claw! Is it possible that I hear the daughter of my lord, the great griffin?"

"Hush, flatterer! not so loud, if you please. My father is taking an evening stroll, and is very quick of hearing. He has tied me up by my poor wings in the cavern, for he is mightily afraid of some beast running away with me. You know I have all my fortune settled on myself."

"Talk not of fortune," said the fox; "but how can I deliver you? Shall I enter and gnaw the cord?"

"Alas!" answered the griffiness, "it is an immense chain I am bound with. However, you may come in and talk more at your ease."

The fox peeped cautiously all round, and seeing no sign of the griffin, he entered the lower cave and stole up stairs

to the upper story; but as he went on, he saw immense piles of jewels and gold, and all sorts of treasure, so that the old griffin might well have laughed at the poor cat being called an heiress. The fox was greatly pleased at such indisputable signs of wealth, and he entered the upper cave, resolved to be transported with the charms of the griffiness.

There was, however, a great chasm between the landing-place and the spot where the young lady was chained, and he found it impossible to pass; the cavern was very dark, but he saw enough of the figure of the griffiness to perceive, in spite of her petticoat, that she was the image of her father, and the most hideous heiress that the earth ever saw.

However, he swallowed his disgust, and poured forth such a heap of compliments that the griffiness appeared entirely won.

He implored her to fly with him the first moment she was unchained.

"That is impossible," said she; "for my father never unchains me except in his presence, and then I cannot stir out of his sight."

"The wretch!" cried Reynard, "what is to be done?"

"Why, there is only one thing I know of," answered the griffiness, "which is this—I always make his soup for him, and if I could mix something in it that would put him fast to sleep before he had time to chain me up again I might slip down and carry off all the treasure below on my back."

"Charming!" exclaimed Reynard; "what invention! what wit! I will go and get some poppies directly."

"Alas!" said the griffiness, "poppies have no effect upon griffins. The only thing that can ever put my father fast to sleep is a nice young cat boiled up in his soup; it is astonishing what a charm that has upon him! But where to get a cat?—it must be a maiden cat too!"

Reynard was a little startled at so singular an opiate. "But," thought he, "griffins are not like the rest of the world, and so rich an heiress is not to be won by ordinary means."

"I do know a cat—a maiden cat," said he, after a short pause; "but I feel a little repugnance at the thought of having her boiled in the griffin's soup. Would not a dog do as well?"

"Ah, base thing!" said the griffiness, appearing to weep; "you are in love with the cat, I see it; go and marry her, poor dwarf that she is, and leave me to die of grief."

In vain the fox protested that he did not care a straw for the cat; nothing could now appease the griffiness, but his positive assurance that come what would, poor puss should be brought to the cave and boiled for the griffin's soup.

"But how will you get her here?" said the griffiness.

"Ah, leave that to me," said Reynard. "Only put a basket out of the window and draw it up by a cord; the moment it arrives at the window, be sure to clap your claw on the cat at once, for she is terribly active."

"Tush!" answered the heiress; "a pretty griffiness I should be if I did not know how to catch a cat!"

"But this must be when your father is out?" said Reynard.

"Certainly: he takes a stroll every evening at sunset."

"Let it be to-morrow, then," said Reynard, impatient for the treasure.

This being arranged, Reynard thought it time to decamp. He stole down the stairs again, and tried to filch some of the treasure by the way; but it was too heavy for him to carry, and he was forced to acknowledge to himself that it was impossible to get the treasure without taking the griffiness (whose back seemed prodigiously strong) into the bargain.

He returned home to the cat, and when he entered her house, and saw how ordinary everything looked after the jewels in the griffin's cave, he quite wondered how he had ever thought the cat had the least pretensions to good looks. However, he concealed his wicked design, and his mistress thought he had never appeared so amiable.

"Only guess," said he, "where I have been?—to our new

neighbour the griffin; a most charming person, thoroughly affable, and quite the air of the court. As for that silly magpie, the griffin saw her character at once; and it was all a hoax about his daughter: he has no daughter at all. You know, my dear, hoaxing is a fashionable amusement among the great. He says he has heard of nothing but your beauty, and on my telling him we were going to be married, he has insisted upon giving a great ball and supper in honor of the event. In fact, he is a gallant old fellow and dying to see you. Of course, I was obliged to accept the invitation."

"You could not do otherwise," said the unsuspecting young creature, who, as I before said, was very susceptible to flattery.

"And only think how delicate his attentions are," said the fox. "As he is very badly lodged for a beast of his rank, and his treasure takes up the whole of the ground floor, he is forced to give the *fête* in the upper story, so he hangs out a basket for his guests, and draws them up with his own claw. How condescending! But the great *are* so amiable!"

The cat, brought up in seclusion, was all delight at the idea of seeing such high life, and the lovers talked of nothing else all the next day;—when Reynard, towards evening, putting his head out of the window, saw his old friend the dog lying as usual and watching him very grimly. "Ah, that cursed creature! I had quite forgotten him; what is to be done now? He would make no bones of me if he once saw me set foot out of doors."

With that, the fox began to cast in his head how he should get rid of his rival, and at length he resolved on a very notable project: he desired the cat to set out first, and wait for him at a turn in the road a little way off. "For," said he, "if we go together we shall certainly be insulted by the dog; and he will know that in the presence of a lady, the custom of a beast of my fashion will not suffer me to avenge the affront. But when I am alone, the creature is

such a coward that he will not dare say his soul's his own: leave the door open and I'll follow immediately."

The cat's mind was so completely poisoned against her cousin that she implicitly believed this account of his character, and accordingly, with many recommendations to her lover not to sully his dignity by getting into any sort of quarrel with the dog, she set off first.

The dog went up to her very humbly, and begged her to allow him to say a few words to her; but she received him so haughtily, that his spirit was up; and he walked back to the tree more than ever enraged against his rival. But what was his joy when he saw that the cat had left the door open! "Now wretch," thought he, "you cannot escape me!" So he walked briskly in at the back door. He was greatly surprised to find Reynard lying down in the straw, panting as if his heart would break, and rolling his eyes in the pangs of death.

"Ah, friend," said the fox, with a faltering voice, "you are avenged, my hour is come; I am just going to give up the ghost: put your paw upon mine, and say you forgive me."

Despite his anger, the generous dog could not set tooth on a dying foe.

"You have served me a shabby trick," said he; "you have left me to starve in a hole, and you have evidently maligned me with my cousin: certainly I meant to be avenged on you; but if you are really dying, that alters the affair."

"Oh, oh!" groaned the fox very bitterly; "I am past help; the poor cat is gone for Doctor Ape, but he'll never come in time. What a thing it is to have a bad conscience on one's death-bed! But, wait till the cat returns, and I'll do you full justice with her before I die."

The good-natured dog was much moved at seeing his mortal enemy in such a state, and endeavoured as well as he could to console him.

"Oh, oh!" said the fox; "I am so parched in the throat

—I am burning;" and he hung his tongue out of his mouth, and rolled his eyes more fearfully than ever.

"Is there no water here?" said the dog, looking round.

"Alas, no!—yet stay—yes, now I think of it, there is some in that little hole in the wall; but how to get at it!—it is so high that I can't, in my poor weak state, climb up to it; and I dare not ask such a favor of one I have injured so much."

"Don't talk of it," said the dog; "but the hole's very small, I could not put my nose through it."

"No; but if you just climb up on that stone, and thrust your paw into the hole, you can dip it into the water, and so cool my poor parched mouth. Oh, what a thing it is to have a bad conscience!"

The dog sprang upon the stone, and, getting on his hind legs, thrust his front paw into the hole; when suddenly Reynard pulled a string that he had concealed under the straw, and the dog found his paw caught tight to the wall in a running noose.

"Ah, rascal!" said he, turning round; but the fox leaped up gaily from the straw, and fastening the string with his teeth to a nail in the other end of the wall, walked out, crying, "Good-bye, my dear friend; have a care how you believe hereafter in sudden conversions!" So he left the dog on his hind legs to take care of the house.

Reynard found the cat waiting for him where he had appointed, and they walked lovingly together till they came to the cave. It was now dark, and they saw the basket waiting below; the fox assisted the poor cat into it. "There is only room for one," said he, "you must go first!" up rose the basket; the fox heard a piteous mew, and no more.

"So much for the griffin's soup!" thought he.

He waited patiently for some time, when the griffiness, waving her claw from the window, said cheerfully, "All's right, my dear Reynard; my papa has finished his soup, and sleeps as sound as a rock! All the noise in the world would not wake him now, till he has slept off the boiled cat

—which won't be these twelve hours. Come and assist me in packing up the treasure; I should be sorry to leave a single diamond behind."

"So should I," quoth the fox. "Stay, I'll come round by the lower hole: why, the door's shut! pray, beautiful griffiness, open it to thy impatient adorer."

"Alas, my father has hid the key! I never know where he places it: you must come up by the basket; see, I will lower it for you."

The fox was a little loth to trust himself in the same conveyance that had taken his mistress to be boiled; but the most cautious grow rash when money's to be gained, and avarice can trap even a fox. So he put himself as comfortably as he could into the basket, and up he went in an instant. It rested, however, just before it reached the window, and the fox felt, with a slight shudder, the claw of the griffiness stroking his back.

"Oh, what a beautiful coat!" quoth she, caressingly.

"You are too kind," said the fox; "but you can feel it more at your leisure when I am once up. Make haste, I beseech you."

"Oh, what a beautiful bushy tail! Never did I feel such a tail."

"It is entirely at your service, sweet griffiness," said the fox; "but pray let me in. Why lose an instant?"

"No, never did I feel such a tail! No wonder you are so successful with the ladies."

"Ah, beloved griffiness, my tail is yours to eternity, but you pinch it a little too hard."

Scarcely had he said this, when down dropped the basket, but not with the fox in it; he found himself caught by the tail, and dangling half way down the rock, by the help of the very same sort of pulley wherewith he had snared the dog. I leave you to guess his consternation; he yelped out as loud as he could,—for it hurts a fox exceedingly to be hanged by his tail with his head downwards,—when the door of the rock opened, and out stalked the griffin himself,

smoking his pipe, with a vast crowd of all the fashionable beasts in the neighbourhood.

"Oho, brother," said the bear, laughing fit to kill himself; "who ever saw a fox hanged by the tail before?"

"You'll have need of a physician," quoth Doctor Ape.

"A pretty match, indeed; a griffiness for such a creature as you," said the goat, strutting by him.

The fox grinned with pain, and said nothing. But that which hurt him most was the compassion of a dull fool of a donkey, who assured him with great gravity that he saw nothing at all to laugh at in his situation!

"At all events," said the fox at last, "cheated, gulled, betrayed as I am, I have played the same trick to the dog. Go and laugh at him, gentlemen; he deserves it as much as I can, I assure you."

"Pardon me," said the griffin, taking the pipe out of his mouth; "one never laughs at the honest."

"And see," said the bear, "here he is."

And indeed the dog had, after much effort, gnawed the string in two, and extricated his paw: the scent of the fox had enabled him to track his footsteps, and here he arrived, burning for vengeance and finding himself already avenged.

But his first thought was for his dear cousin. "Ah, where is she?" he cried movingly; "without doubt that villain Reynard has served her some scurvy trick."

"I fear so indeed, my old friend," answered the griffin, "but don't grieve: after all, she was nothing particular. You shall marry my daughter the griffiness, and succeed to all the treasure; ay, and all the bones that you once guarded so faithfully."

"Talk not to me," said the faithful dog. "I want none of your treasure; and, though I don't mean to be rude, your griffiness may go to the devil. I will run over the world but I will find my dear cousin."

"See her then," said the griffin; and the beautiful cat, more beautiful than ever, rushed out of the cavern, and threw herself into the dog's paws.

A pleasant scene this for the fox!—he had skill enough in the female heart to know that it may excuse many little infidelities,—but to be boiled alive for a griffin's soup—no, the offence was inexpiable.

"You understand me, Mr. Reynard," said the griffin, "I have no daughter, and it was me you made love to. Knowing what sort of a creature a magpie is, I amused myself with hoaxing her,—the fashionable amusement at court, you know."

The fox made a mighty struggle, and leaped on the ground, leaving his tail behind him. It did not grow again in a hurry.

"See," said the griffin, as the beasts all laughed at the figure Reynard made running into the wood, "the dog beats the fox with the ladies, after all; and cunning as he is in everything else, the fox is the last creature that should ever think of making love!"

"Charming!" cried Nymphalin, clasping her hands; "it is just the sort of story I like."

"And I suppose, sir," said Nip, pertly, "that the dog and the cat lived very happily ever afterwards? Indeed the nuptial felicity of a dog and cat is proverbial!"

"I dare say they lived much the same as any other married couple," answered the prince.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TOMB OF A FATHER OF MANY CHILDREN.

The feast being now ended, as well as the story, the fairies wound their way homeward by a different path, till at length a red steady light glowed through the long basaltic arches upon them, like the Demon Hunters' fires in the Forest of Pines.

The prince sobered in his pace. "You approach," said he, in a grave tone, "the greatest of our temples; you will

witness the tomb of a mighty founder of our race!" An awe crept over the queen, in spite of herself. Tracking the fires in silence, they came to a vast space, in the midst of which was a long grey block of stone, such as the traveller finds amidst the dread silence of Egyptian Thebes.

And on this stone lay the gigantic figure of a man—dead, but not death-like, for invisible spells had preserved the flesh and the long hair for untold ages; and beside him lay a rude instrument of music, and at his feet was a sword and a hunter's spear; and above, the rock wound, hollowed and roofless, to the upper air, and daylight came through, sickened and pale, beneath red fires that burnt everlastingly around him, on such simple altars as belong to a savage race. But the place was not solitary, for many motionless, but not lifeless shapes sat on large blocks of stone beside the tomb. There was the wizard, wrapped in his long black mantle, and his face covered with his hands—there was the uncouth and deformed dwarf, gibbering to himself—there sat the household elf—there glowered from a gloomy rent in the wall, with glittering eyes and shining scale, the enormous dragon of the North. An aged crone in rags, leaning on a staff, and gazing malignantly on the visitors, with bleared but fiery eyes, stood opposite the tomb of the gigantic dead. And now the fairies themselves completed the group! But all was dumb and unutterably silent; the silence that floats over some antique city of the desert, when, for the first time for a hundred centuries a living foot enters its desolate remains; the silence that belongs to the dust of eld,—deep, solemn, palpable, and sinking into the heart with a leaden and death-like weight. Even the English fairy spoke not; she held her breath, and gazing on the tomb, she saw, in rude vast characters,

THE TEUTON.

"*We* are all that remain of his religion!" said the prince, as they turned from the dread temple.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FAIRY'S CAVE, AND THE FAIRY'S WISH.

It was evening; and the fairies were dancing beneath the twilight star.

"And why art thou sad, my violet?" said the prince; "for thine eyes seek the ground!"

"Now that I have found thee," answered the queen, "and now that I feel what happy love is to a fairy, I sigh over that love which I have lately witnessed among mortals, but the bud of whose happiness already conceals the worm. For well didst thou say, my prince, that we are linked with a mysterious affinity to mankind, and whatever is pure and gentle amongst them speaks at once to our sympathy, and commands our vigils."

"And most of all," said the German fairy, "are they who love under our watch; for love is the golden chain that binds all in the universe: love lights up alike the star and the glow-worm; and wherever there is love in men's lot, lies the secret affinity with men, and with things divine."

"But with the human race," said Nymphalin, "there is no love that outlasts the hour, for either death ends, or custom alters: when the blossom comes to fruit, it is plucked and seen no more; and therefore, when I behold true love sentenced to an early grave, I comfort myself that I shall not at least behold the beauty dimmed, and the softness of the heart hardened into stone. Yet, my prince, while still the pulse can beat, and the warm blood flow, in that beautiful form, which I have watched over of late, let me not desert her; still let my influence keep the sky fair, and the breezes pure; still let me drive the vapour from the moon, and the clouds from the faces of the stars: still let me fill her dreams with tender and brilliant images, and glass in the mirror of sleep the happiest visions of fairyland; still let me pour over her eyes that magic, which

suffers them to see no fault in one in whom she has garnered up her soul! and as death comes slowly on, still let me rob the spectre of its terror, and the grave of its sting; —so that, all gently and unconscious to herself, life may glide into the Great Ocean where the shadows lie; and the spirit without guile may be severed from its mansion without pain!"

The wish of the fairy was fulfilled.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BANKS OF THE RHINE.—FROM THE DRACHENFELS TO BROHL: AN INCIDENT THAT SUFFICES IN THIS TALE FOR AN EPOCH.

From the Drachenfels commences the true glory of the Rhine; and, once more, Gertrude's eyes conquered the languor that crept gradually over them as she gazed on the banks around.

Fair blew the breeze, and freshly curled the waters; and Gertrude did not feel the vulture that had fixed its talons within her breast. The Rhine widens, like a broad lake, between the Drachenfels and Unkel; villages are scattered over the extended plain on the left; on the right is the Isle of Werth and the houses of Oberwinter; the hills are covered with vines; and still Gertrude turned back with a lingering gaze to the lofty crest of the Seven Hills.

On, on—and the spires of Unkel rose above a curve in the banks, and on the opposite shore stretched those wondrous basaltic columns which extend to the middle of the river, and when the Rhine runs low, you may see them like an engulfed city beneath the waves. You then view the ruins of Okkenfels, and hear the voice of the pastoral Gasbach pouring its waters into the Rhine. From amidst the clefts of the rocks the vine peeps luxuriantly forth, and gives a richness and colouring to what Nature, left to herself, intended for the stern.

"But turn your eye backward to the right," said Trevylyan, "those banks were formerly the special haunt of the bold robbers of the Rhine, and from amidst the entangled brakes that then covered the ragged cliffs they rushed upon their prey. In the gloomy canvas of those feudal days what vigorous and mighty images were crowded! A robber's life amidst these mountains, and beside this mountain stream, must have been the very poetry of the spot carried into action."

They rested at Brohl, a small town between two mountains. On the summit of one you see the grey remains of Rheinech. There is something weird and preternatural about the aspect of this place; its soil betrays signs that in the former ages (from which even tradition is fast fading away) some volcano here exhausted its fires. The stratum of the earth is black and pitchy, and the springs beneath it are of a dark and graveolent water. Here the stream of the Brohlbach falls into the Rhine, and in a valley rich with oak and pine, and full of caverns, which are not without their traditionary inmates, stands the castle of Schweppenbourg, which our party failed not to visit.

Gertrude felt fatigued on their return, and Trevylyan sat by her in the little inn, while Vane went forth, with the curiosity of science, to examine the strata of the soil.

They conversed in the frankness of their plighted troth upon those topics which are only for lovers: upon the bright chapter in the history of their love; their first meeting; their first impressions; the little incidents in their present journey—incidents noticed by themselves alone; that life *within* life which two persons know together,—which one knows not without the other,—which ceases to both the instant they are divided.

"I know not what the love of others may be," said Gertrude, "but ours seems different from all of which I have read. Books tell us of jealousies and misconstructions, and the necessity of an absence, the sweetness of a quarrel; but *we*, dearest Albert, have had no experience of these pas-

sages in love. *We* have never misunderstood each other; *we* have no reconciliation to look back to. When was there ever occasion for me to ask forgiveness from you? Our love is made up only of one memory—unceasing kindness! A harsh word, a wronging thought, never broke in upon the happiness we have felt and feel."

"Dearest Gertrude," said Trevylyan, "that character of our love is caught from you; you, the soft, the gentle, have been its pervading genius; and the well has been smooth and pure; for you were the spirit that lived within its depths."

And to such talk succeeded silence still more sweet—the silence of the hushed and overflowing heart. The last voices of the birds—the sun slowly sinking in the west—the fragrance of descending dews—filled them with that deep and mysterious sympathy which exists between Love and Nature.

It was after such a silence—a long silence, that seemed but as a moment—that Trevylyan spoke, but Gertrude answered not; and, yearning once more for her sweet voice, he turned and saw that she had fainted away.

This was the first indication of the point to which her increasing debility had arrived. Trevylyan's heart stood still, and then beat violently; a thousand fears crept over him, he clasped her in his arms, and bore her to the open window. The setting sun fell upon her countenance, from which the play of the young heart and warm fancy had fled, and in its deep and still repose the ravages of disease were darkly visible. What were then his emotions! his heart was like stone; but he felt a rush as of a torrent to his temples: his eyes grew dizzy—he was stunned by the greatness of his despair. For the last week he had taken hope for his companion; Gertrude had seemed so much stronger, for her happiness had given her a false support; and though there had been moments when, watching the bright hectic come and go, and her step linger, and the breath heave short, he had felt the hope suddenly cease,

yet never had he known till now that fulness of anguish, that dread certainty of the worst, which the calm, fair face before him struck into his soul: and mixed with this agony as he gazed was all the passion of the most ardent love. For there she lay in his arms, the gentle breath rising from lips where the rose yet lingered, and the long, rich hair, soft and silken as an infant's, stealing from its confinement: everything that belonged to Gertrude's beauty was so inexpressibly soft, and pure, and youthful! Scarcely seventeen, she seemed much younger than she was; her figure had sunken from its roundness, but still how light, how lovely were its wrecks! the neck whiter than snow,—the fair small hand! Her weight was scarcely felt in the arms of her lover,—and he—what a contrast!—was in all the pride and flower of glorious manhood! his was the lofty brow, the wreathing hair, the haughty eye, the elastic form; and upon this frail, perishable thing had he fixed all his heart, all the hopes of his youth, the pride of his manhood, his schemes, his energies, his ambition!

"Oh, Gertrude!" cried he, "is it—is it thus—is there indeed no hope?"

And Gertrude now slowly recovering, and opening her eyes upon Trevylyan's face, the revulsion was so great, his emotions so overpowering, that, clasping her to his bosom, as if even death should not tear her away from him, he wept over her in an agony of tears; not those tears that relieve the heart, but the fiery rain of the internal storm, a sign of the fierce tumult that shook the very core of his existence, not a relief.

Awakened to herself, Gertrude, in amazement and alarm, threw her arms around his neck, and, looking wistfully into his face, implored him to speak to her.

"Was it my illness, love?" said she; and the music of her voice only conveyed to him the thought of how soon it would be dumb to him for ever. "Nay," she continued, winningly, "it was but the heat of the day; I am better now—I am well; there is no cause to be alarmed for me:"

and, with all the innocent fondness of extreme youth, she kissed the burning tears from his eyes.

There was a playfulness, an innocence in this poor girl, so unconscious as yet of her destiny, which rendered her fate doubly touching; and which to the stern Trevylyan, hackneyed by the world, made her irresistible charm; and now as she put aside her hair, and looked up gratefully, yet pleadingly, into his face, he could scarce refrain from pouring out to her the confession of his anguish and despair. But the necessity of self-control—the necessity of concealing from *her* a knowledge which might only, by impressing her imagination, expedite her doom, while it would embitter to her mind the unconscious enjoyment of the hour, nerved and manned him. He checked by those violent efforts which only men can make, the evidence of his emotions; and endeavoured, by a rapid torrent of words, to divert her attention from a weakness, the causes of which he could not explain. Fortunately Vane soon returned, and Trevylyan, consigning Gertrude to his care, hastily left the room.

Gertrude sank into a reverie.

"Ah, dear father!" said she, suddenly, and after a pause, "if I indeed were worse than I have thought myself of late—if I were to die now, what would Trevylyan feel? Pray God I may live for his sake!"

"My child, do not talk thus: you are better, much better than you were. Ere the autumn ends, Trevylyan's happiness will be your lawful care. Do not think so despondently of yourself."

"I thought not of myself," sighed Gertrude, "but of *him!*"

CHAPTER XVI.

GERTRUDE.—THE EXCURSION TO HAMMERSTEIN.—THOUGHTS.

THE next day they visited the environs of Brohl. Gertrude was unusually silent; for her temper, naturally sunny and enthusiastic, was accustomed to light up everything she saw. Ah, once how bounding was that step! how undulating the young graces of that form! how playfully once danced the ringlets on that laughing cheek! But she clung to Trevylyan's proud form with a yet more endearing tenderness than was her wont, and hung yet more eagerly on his words; her hand sought his, and she often pressed it to her lips, and sighed as she did so. Something that she would not tell seemed passing within her, and sobered her playful mood. But there was this noticeable in Gertrude: whatever took away from her gaiety increased her tenderness. The infirmities of her frame never touched her temper. She was kind—gentle—loving to the last.

They had crossed to the opposite banks, to visit the Castle of Hammerstein. The evening was transparently serene and clear; and the warmth of the sun yet lingered upon the air, even though the twilight had passed and the moon risen, as their boat returned by a lengthened passage to the village. Broad and straight flows the Rhine in this part of its career. On one side lay the wooded village of Namedy, the hamlet of Fornech, backed by the blue rock of Kruezborner Ley, the mountains that shield the mysterious Brohl: and, on the opposite shore, they saw the mighty rock of Hammerstein, with the green and livid ruins sleeping in the melancholy moonlight. Two towers rose haughtily above the more dismantled wrecks. How changed since the alternate banners of the Spaniard and the Swede waved from their ramparts, in that great war in which the gorgeous Wallenstein won his laurels! And in its mighty calm flowed on the ancestral Rhine; the vessel reflected on its smooth expanse, and above, girded by thin and shadowy

clouds, the moon cast her shadows upon rocks covered with verdure, and brought into a dim light the twin spires of Andernach, tranquil in the distance.

"How beautiful is this hour!" said Gertrude, with a low voice; "surely we do not live enough in the night; one half the beauty of the world is slept away. What in the day can equal the holy calm, the loveliness, and the stillness which the moon now casts over the earth? These," she continued, pressing Trevylyan's hand, "are hours to remember; and *you*,—will you ever forget them?"

Something there is in recollections of such times and scenes that seem not to belong to real life, but are rather an episode in its history; they are like some wandering into a more ideal world; they refuse to blend with our ruder associations; they live in us, apart and alone, to be treasured ever, but not lightly to be recalled. There are none living to whom we can confide them,—who can sympathise with what then we felt? It is this that makes poetry, and that page which we create as a confidant to ourselves, necessary to the thoughts that weigh upon the breast. We write, for our writing is our friend, the inanimate paper is our confessional; we pour forth on it the thoughts that we could tell to no private ear, and are relieved—are consoled. And, if genius has one prerogative dearer than the rest, it is that which enables it to do honour to the dead—to revive the beauty, the virtue that are no more; to wreathe chaplets that outlive the day around the urn which were else forgotten by the world!

When the poet mourns, in his immortal verse, for the dead, tell me not that fame is in his mind! it is filled by thoughts, by emotions that shut out the living. He is breathing to his genius—to that sole and constant friend which has grown up with him from his cradle—the sorrows too delicate for human sympathy! and when afterwards he consigns the confession to the crowd, it is indeed from the hope of honour;—honour not for himself, but for the being that is no more.

CHAPTER XVII.

LETTER FROM TREVYLYAN TO ——.

"*Coblentz.*

"I AM obliged to you, my dear friend, for your letter; which, indeed, I have not, in the course of our rapid journey, had the leisure, perhaps the heart, to answer before. But we are staying in this town for some days, and I write now in the early morning, ere any one else in our hotel is awake. Do not tell me of adventure, of politics, of intrigues; my nature is altered. I threw down your letter, animated and brilliant as it was, with a sick and revolted heart. But I am now in somewhat less dejected spirits. Gertrude is better—yes, really better; there is a physician here who gives me hope; my care is perpetually to amuse, and never to fatigue her,—never to permit her thoughts to rest upon herself. For I have imagined that illness cannot, at least in the unexhausted vigour of our years, fasten upon us irremediably unless we feed it with our own belief in its existence. You see men of the most delicate frames engaged in active and professional pursuits, who literally have no time for illness. Let them become idle—let them take care of themselves—let them think of their health—and they die! The rust rots the steel which use preserves; and, thank Heaven, although Gertrude, once during our voyage, seemed roused, by an inexcusable imprudence of emotion on my part, into some suspicion of her state, yet it passed away, for she thinks rarely of herself—I am ever in her thoughts and seldom from her side, and you know, too, the sanguine and credulous nature of her disease. But, indeed, I now hope more than I have done since I knew her.

"When, after an excited and adventurous life which had comprised so many changes in so few years, I found myself at rest in the bosom of a retired and remote part of the

country, and Gertrude and her father were my only neighbours, I was in that state of mind in which the passions, recruited by solitude, are accessible to the purer and more divine emotions. I was struck by Gertrude's beauty, I was charmed by her simplicity. Worn in the usages and fashions of the world, the inexperience, the trustfulness, the exceeding youth of her mind, charmed and touched me; but when I saw the stamp of our national disease in her bright eye and transparent cheek, I felt my love chilled while my interest was increased. I fancied myself safe, and I went daily into the danger; I imagined so pure a light could not burn, and I was consumed. Not till my anxiety grew into pain, my interest into terror, did I know the secret of my own heart; and at the moment that I discovered this secret, I discovered also that Gertrude loved me! What a destiny was mine! what happiness, yet what misery! Gertrude was my own—but for what period? I might touch that soft hand—I might listen to the tenderest confession from that silver voice,—but all the while my heart spoke of passion, my reason whispered of death. You know that I am considered of a cold and almost callous nature, that I am not easily moved into affection, but my very pride bowed me here into weakness. There was so soft a demand upon my protection, so constant an appeal to my anxiety. You know that my father's quick temper burns within me, that I am hot, and stern, and exacting; but one hasty word, one thought of myself, here were inexcusable. So brief a time might be left for her earthly happiness,—could I embitter one moment? All that feeling of uncertainty which should in prudence have prevented my love, increased it almost to a preternatural excess. That which it is said mothers feel for an only child in sickness, I feel for Gertrude. *My* existence is not!—I exist in her!

"Her illness increased upon her at home; they have recommended travel. She chose the course we were to pursue, and, fortunately, it was so familiar to me, that I have been enabled to brighten the way. I am ever on the watch

that she shall not know a weary hour; you would almost smile to see how I have roused myself from my habitual silence; and to find me—me, the scheming and worldly actor of real life, plunged back into the early romance of my boyhood, and charming the childish delight of Gertrude with the invention of fables and the traditions of the Rhine.

"But I believe that I have succeeded in my object; if not, what is left to me? *Gertrude is better!*—In that sentence what visions of hope dawn upon me! I wish you could have seen Gertrude before we left England; you might then have understood my love for her. Not that we have not, in the gay capitals of Europe, paid our brief vows to forms more richly beautiful; not that we have not been charmed by a more brilliant genius,—by a more tutored grace. But there is that in Gertrude which I never saw before; the union of the childish and the intellectual, an ethereal simplicity, a temper that is never dimmed, a tenderness—oh God! let me not speak of her virtues, for they only tell me how little she is suited to the earth.

"You will direct to me at Mayence whither our course now leads us, and your friendship will find indulgence for a letter that is so little a reply to yours.

"Your sincere friend,

"A. G. Trevylyan."

CHAPTER XVIII.

COBLENTZ.—EXCURSION TO THE MOUNTAINS OF TAUNUS; ROMAN TOWER IN THE VALLEY OF EHRENBREITSTEIN.—TRAVEL, ITS PLEASURES ESTIMATED DIFFERENTLY BY THE YOUNG AND THE OLD—THE STUDENT OF HEIDELBERG; HIS CRITICISMS ON GERMAN LITERATURE.

Gertrude had, indeed, apparently rallied during their stay at Coblentz; and a French physician established in the town (who adopted a peculiar treatment for consumption, which had been attended with no ordinary success), gave her father and Trevylyan a sanguine assurance of her ulti-

mate recovery. The time they passed within the white walls of Coblentz was, therefore, the happiest and most cheerful part of their pilgrimage. They visited the various places in it vicinity; but the excursion which most delighted Gertrude was one to the mountains of Taunus.

They took advantage of a beautiful September day; and, crossing the river, commenced their tour from the Thal, or valley of Ehrenbreitstein. They stopped on their way to view the remains of a Roman tower in the valley; for the whole of that district bears frequent witness of the ancient conquerors of the world. The mountains of Taunus are still intersected with the roads which the Romans cut to the mines that supplied them with silver. Roman urns, and inscribed stones, are often found in these ancient places. The stones, inscribed with names utterly unknown—a type of the uncertainty of fame!—the urns, from which the dust is gone—a very satire upon life!

Lone, grey, and mouldering, this tower stands aloft in the valley; and the quiet Vane smiled to see the uniform of a modern Prussian, with his white belt and lifted bayonet, by the spot which had once echoed to the clang of the Roman arms. The soldier was paying a momentary court to a country damsel, whose straw hat and rustic dress did not stifle the vanity of the sex; and this rude and humble gallantry, in that spot, was another moral in the history of human passions. Above, the ramparts of a modern rule frowned down upon the solitary tower, as if in the vain insolence with which present power looks upon past decay; the living race upon ancestral greatness. And indeed, in this respect, rightly!—for modern times have no parallel to that degradation of human dignity stamped upon the ancient world by the long sway of the Imperial Harlot, all slavery herself, yet all tyranny to earth;—and, like her own Messalina, at once a prostitute and an empress!

They continued their course by the ancient baths of Ems, and, keeping by the banks of the romantic Lahn, arrived at Holzapfel.

EHRENBREITSTEIN

"Ah," said Gertrude, one day, as they proceeded to the springs of the Carlovingian Wiesbaden, "surely perpetual travel with those we love must be the happiest state of existence! If home has its comforts, it also has its cares; but here we are at home with Nature, and the minor evils vanish almost before they are felt."

"True," said Trevylyan, "we escape from 'THE LITTLE,' which is the curse of life; the small cares that devour us up, the grievances of the day. We are feeding the divinest part of our nature,—the appetite to admire."

"But of all things wearisome," said Vane, "a succession of changes is the most. There can be a monotony in variety itself. As the eye aches in gazing long at the new shapes of the kaleidoscope, the mind aches at the fatigue of a constant alternation of objects; and we delightedly return to 'REST,' which is to life what green is to the earth."

In the course of their sojourn among the various baths of Taunus, they fell in, by accident, with a German student of Heidelberg, who was pursuing the pedestrian excursions so peculiarly favoured by his tribe. He was tamer and gentler than the general herd of those young wanderers, and our party were much pleased with his enthusiasm, because it was unaffected. He had been in England, and spoke its language almost as a native.

"Our literature," said he, one day, conversing with Vane, "has two faults—we are too subtle and too homely. We do not speak enough to the broad comprehension of mankind; we are for ever making abstract qualities of flesh and blood. Our critics have turned your *Hamlet* into an allegory; they will not even allow Shakespeare to paint mankind, but insist on his embodying qualities. They turn poetry into metaphysics, and truth seems to them shallow, unless an allegory, which is false, can be seen at the bottom. Again, too, with our most imaginative works we mix a homeliness that we fancy touching, but which in reality is ludicrous. We eternally step from the sublime to the ridiculous—we want taste."

"But not, I hope, French taste. Do not govern a Goethe, or even a Richter, by a Boileau!" said Trevylyan.

"No, but Boileau's taste was false. Men, who have the reputation for good taste, often acquire it solely because of the want of genius. By taste I mean a quick tact into the harmony of composition, the art of making the whole consistent with its parts, the *concinnitas*—Schiller alone of our authors has it;—but we are fast mending; and, by following shadows so long, we have been led at last to the substance. Our past literature is to us what astrology was to science,—false but ennobling, and conducting us to the true language of the intellectual heaven."

Another time the scenes they passed, interspersed with the ruins of frequent monasteries, leading them to converse on the monastic life, and the various additions time makes to religion, the German said: "Perhaps one of the works most wanted in the world, is the history of Religion. We have several books, it is true, on the subject, but none that supply the want I allude to. A German ought to write it; for it is, probably, only a German that would have the requisite learning. A German only, too, is likely to treat the mighty subject with boldness, and yet with veneration; without the shallow flippancy of the Frenchman, without the timid sectarianism of the English. It would be a noble task, to trace the winding mazes of antique falsehood; to clear up the first glimmerings of divine truth; to separate Jehovah's word from man's invention; to vindicate the All-merciful from the dread creeds of bloodshed and of fear: and, watching in the great Heaven of Truth the dawning of the True Star, follow it—like the Magi of the East—till it rested above the real God. Not indeed presuming to such a task," continued the German, with a slight blush, "I have about me a humble essay, which treats only of one part of that august subject; which, leaving to a loftier genius the history of the true religion, may be considered as the history of a false one;—of such a creed as Christianity supplanted in the north; or

such as may perhaps be found among the fiercest of the savage tribes. It is a fiction—as you may conceive; but yet, by a constant reference to the early records of human learning, I have studied to weave it up from truths. If you would like to hear it—it is very short——"

"Above all things," said Vane; and the German drew a manuscript neatly bound from his pocket.

"After having myself criticised so insolently the faults of our national literature," said he, smiling, "you will have a right to criticise the faults that belong to so humble a disciple of it. But you will see that, though I have commenced with the allegorical or the supernatural, I have endeavoured to avoid the subtlety of conceit, and the obscurity of design, which I blame in the wilder of our authors. As to the style, I wished to suit it to the subject; it ought to be, unless I err, rugged and massive; hewn, as it were, out of the rock of primæval language. But you, madam;—doubtless you do not understand German?"

"Her mother was an Austrian," said Vane; "and she knows at least enough of the tongue to understand you; so pray begin."

Without further preface, the German then commenced the story, which the reader will find translated [1] in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FALLEN STAR; OR, THE HISTORY OF A FALSE RELIGION.

And the Stars sat, each on his ruby throne, and watched with sleepless eyes upon the world. It was the night ushering in the new year, a night on which every star receives from the archangel that then visits the universal galaxy, its peculiar charge. The destinies of men and em-

[1] Nevertheless I beg to state seriously, that the German student is an impostor; and that he has no right to wrest the parentage of the fiction from the true author.

pires are then portioned forth for the coming year, and, unconsciously to ourselves, our fates become minioned to the stars. A hushed and solemn night is that in which the dark gates of time open to receive the ghost of the Dead Year, and the young and radiant Stranger rushes forth from the clouded chasms of Eternity. On that night, it is said that there are given to the spirits that we see not a privilege and a power; the dead are troubled in their forgotten graves, and men feast and laugh, while demon and angel are contending for their doom.

It was night in heaven; all was unutterably silent; the music of the spheres had paused, and not a sound came from the angels of the stars; and they who sat upon those shining thrones were three thousand and ten, each resembling each. Eternal youth clothed their radiant limbs with celestial beauty, and on their faces was written the dread of calm, that fearful stillness which feels not, sympathises not with the dooms over which it broods. War, tempest, pestilence, the rise of empires, and their fall, they ordain, they compass, unexultant and uncompassionate. The fell and thrilling crimes that stalk abroad when the world sleeps, the parricide with his stealthy step, and horrent brow, and lifted knife; the unwifed mother that glides out and looks behind, and behind, and shudders, and casts her babe upon the river, and hears the wail, and pities not—the splash, and does not tremble;—these the starred kings behold—to these they lead the unconscious step; but the guilt blanches not their lustre, neither doth remorse wither their unwrinkled youth. Each star wore a kingly diadem; round the loins of each was a graven belt, graven with many and mighty signs; and the foot of each was on a burning ball, and the right arm drooped over the knee as they bent down from their thrones; they moved not a limb or feature, save the finger of the right hand, which ever and anon moved slowly pointing, and regulated the fates of men as the hand of the dial speaks the career of time.

One only of the three thousand and ten wore not the same

aspect as his crowned brethren; a star smaller than the rest and less luminous; the countenance of this star was not impressed with the awful calmness of the others; but there were sullenness and discontent upon his mighty brow.

And this star said to himself: "Behold! I am created less glorious than my fellows, and the archangel apportions not to me the same lordly destinies. Not for me are the dooms of kings and bards, the rulers of empires, or yet nobler, the swayers and harmonists of souls. Sluggish are the spirits and base the lot of the men I am ordained to lead through a dull life to a fameless grave. And wherefore?—is it mine own fault, or is it the fault which is not mine that I was woven of beams less glorious than my brethren? Lo! when the archangel comes, I will bow not my crowned head to his decrees. I will speak, as the ancestral Lucifer before me; *he* rebelled because of his glory, *I* because of my obscurity; *he* from the ambition of pride, and *I* from its discontent."

And while the star was thus communing with himself, the upward Heavens were parted as by a long river of light, and adown that stream swiftly, and without sound, sped the archangel visitor of the stars; his vast limbs floated in the liquid lustre, and his outspread wings, each plume the glory of a sun, bore him noiselessly along; but thick clouds veiled his lustre from the eyes of mortals, and while above all was bathed in the serenity of his splendour, tempest and storm broke below over the children of the earth: "He bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet."

And the stillness on the faces of the stars became yet more still, and the awfulness was humbled into awe. Right above their thrones paused the course of the archangel; and his wings stretched from east to west, overshadowing with the shadow of light the immensity of space. Then forth, in the shining stillness, rolled the dread music of his voice: and, fulfilling the heraldry of God, to each star he appointed the duty and the charge,

and each star bowed his head yet lower as he heard the fiat, while his throne rocked and trembled at the Majesty of the Word. But, at last, when each of the brighter stars had, in succession, received the mandate, and the viceroyalty over the nations of the earth, the purple and diadems of kings;—the archangel addressed the lesser star as he sat apart from his fellows:

"Behold," said the archangel, "the rude tribes of the north, the fishermen of the river that flows beneath, and the hunters of the forests that darken the mountain tops with verdure! these be thy charge, and their destinies thy care. Nor deem thou, O Star of the sullen beams, that thy duties are less glorious than the duties of thy brethren; for the peasant is not less to thy master and mine than the monarch; nor doth the doom of empires rest more upon the sovereign than on the herd. The passions and the heart are the dominion of the stars,—a mighty realm; nor less mighty beneath the hide that garbs the shepherd, than under the jewelled robes of the eastern kings."

Then the star lifted his pale front from his breast, and answered the archangel:

"Lo!" he said, "ages have passed, and each year thou hast appointed me to the same ignoble charge. Release me, I pray thee, from the duties that I scorn; or, if thou wilt that the lowlier race of men be my charge, give unto me the charge not of many, but of one, and suffer me to breathe into him the desire that spurns the valleys of life, and ascends its steeps. If the humble are given to me, let there be amongst them one whom I may lead on the mission that shall abase the proud; for, behold, O Appointer of the Stars, as I have sat for uncounted years upon my solitary throne, brooding over the things beneath, my spirit hath gathered wisdom from the changes that shift below. Looking upon the tribes of earth, I have seen how the multitude are swayed, and tracked the steps that lead weakness into power; and fain would I be the ruler of one who, if abased, shall aspire to rule."

As a sudden cloud over the face of noon was the change on the brow of the archangel.

"Proud and melancholy star," said the herald, "thy wish would war with the courses of the invisible DESTINY, that, throned far above, sways and harmonises all—the source from which the lesser rivers of fate are eternally gushing through the heart of the universe of things. Thinkest thou that thy wisdom, of itself, can lead the peasant to become a king?"

And the crowned star gazed undauntedly on the face of the archangel, and answered:

"Yea!—grant me but one trial!"

Ere the archangel could reply, the farthest centre of the Heaven was rent as by a thunderbolt; and the divine herald covered his face with his hands, and a voice low and sweet and mild, with the consciousness of unquestionable power, spoke forth to the repining star:

"The time has arrived when thou mayest have thy wish. Below thee, upon yon solitary plain, sits a mortal, gloomy as thyself, who, born under thy influence, may be moulded to thy will."

The voice ceased as the voice of a dream. Silence was over the seas of space, and the archangel, once more borne aloft, slowly soared away into the farther heaven, to promulgate the divine bidding to the stars of far-distant worlds. But the soul of the discontented star exulted within itself; and it said, "I will call forth a king from the valley of the herdsman that shall trample on the kings subject to my fellows, and render the charge of the contemned star more glorious than the minions of its favoured brethren; thus shall I revenge neglect—thus shall I prove my claim hereafter to the heritage of the great of earth!"

* * * * *

At that time, though the world had rolled on for ages, and the pilgrimage of man had passed through various states of existence, which our dim traditionary knowledge

has not preserved, yet the condition of our race in the northern hemisphere was then what *we*, in our imperfect lore, have conceived to be among the earliest.

* * * * *

By a rude and vast pile of stones, the masonry of arts forgotten, a lonely man sat at midnight, gazing upon the heavens; a storm had just passed from the earth—the clouds had rolled away, and the high stars looked down upon the rapid waters of the Rhine; and no sound save the roar of the waves, and the dripping of the rain from the mighty trees, was heard around the ruined pile: the white sheep lay scattered on the plain, and slumber with them. He sat watching over the herd, lest the foes of a neighbouring tribe seized them unawares, and thus he communed with himself: "The king sits upon his throne, and is honoured by a warrior race, and the warrior exults in the trophies he has won; the step of the huntsman is bold upon the mountain-top, and his name is sung at night round the pine-fires by the lips of the bard; and the bard himself hath honour in the hall. But I, who belong not to the race of kings, and whose limbs can bound not to the rapture of war, nor scale the eyries of the eagle and the haunts of the swift stag; whose hand cannot string the harp, and whose voice is harsh in the song; *I* have neither honour nor command, and men bow not the head as I pass along; yet do I feel within me the consciousness of a great power that should rule my species—not obey. My eye pierces the secret hearts of men—I see their thoughts ere their lips proclaim them; and I scorn, while I see, the weakness and the vices which I never shared—I laugh at the madness of the warrior—I mock within my soul at the tyranny of kings. Surely there is something in man's nature more fitted to command—more worthy of renown, than the sinews of the arm, or the swiftness of the feet, or the accident of birth!"

As Morven, the son of Osslah, thus mused within himself, still looking at the heavens, the solitary man beheld a star suddenly shooting from its place, and speeding through

the silent air, till it suddenly paused right over the midnight river, and facing the inmate of the pile of stones.

As he gazed upon the star, strange thoughts grew slowly over him. He drank, as it were, from its solemn aspect, the spirit of a great design. A dark cloud rapidly passing over the earth, snatched the star from his sight: but left to his awakened mind the thoughts and the dim scheme that had come to him as he gazed.

When the sun arose, one of his brethren relieved him of his charge over the herd, and he went away, but not to his father's home. Musingly he plunged into the dark and leafless recesses of the winter forest; and shaped out of his wild thoughts, more palpably and clearly, the outline of his daring hope. While thus absorbed he heard a great noise in the forest, and, fearful lest the hostile tribe of the Alrich might pierce that way, he ascended one of the loftiest pine-trees, to whose perpetual verdure the winter had not denied the shelter he sought, and, concealed by its branches, he looked anxiously forth in the direction whence the noise had proceeded. And IT came—it came with a tramp and a crash, and a crushing tread upon the crunched boughs and matted leaves that strewed the soil—it came—it came, the monster that the world now holds no more—the mighty Mammoth of the North! Slowly it moved its huge strength along, and its burning eyes glittered through the gloomy shade; its jaws, falling apart, showed the grinders with which it snapped asunder the young oaks of the forest; and the vast tusks which, curved downward to the midst of its massive limbs, glistened white and ghastly, curdling the blood of one destined hereafter to be the dreadest ruler of the men of that distant age.

The livid eyes of the monster fastened on the form of the herdsman, even amidst the thick darkness of the pine. It paused—it glared upon him—its jaws opened, and a low deep sound, as of gathering thunder, seemed to the son of Osslah as the knell of a dreadful grave. But after glaring on him for some moments, it again, and calmly, pursued

its terrible way, crashing the boughs as it marched along, till the last sound of its heavy tread died away upon his ear.[1]

Ere yet, however, Morven summoned the courage to descend the tree, he saw the shining of arms through the bare branches of the wood, and presently a small band of the hostile Alrich came into sight. He was perfectly hidden from them; and, listening as they passed him, he heard one say to another:

"The night covers all things; why attack them by day?"

And he who seemed the chief of the band, answered:

"Right. To-night, when they sleep in their city, we will upon them. Lo! they will be drenched in wine, and fall like sheep into our hands."

"But where, O chief," said a third of the band, "shall our men hide during the day? for there are many hunters among the youth of the Oestrich tribe, and they might see us in the forest unawares, and arm their race against our coming."

"I have prepared for that," answered the chief. "Is not the dark cavern of Oderlin at hand? Will it not shelter us from the eyes of the victims?"

Then the men laughed, and, shouting, they went their way adown the forest.

When they were gone, Morven cautiously descended, and, striking into a broad path, hastened to a vale that lay between the forest and the river in which was the city where the chief of his country dwelt. As he passed by the warlike men, giants in that day, who thronged the streets (if streets they might be called), their half garments parting from their huge limbs, the quiver at their backs, and the hunting spear in their hand, they laughed and shouted out, and, pointing to him, cried, "Morven, the woman! Morven, the cripple! what dost thou among men?"

[1] *The critic* will perceive that this sketch of the beast, whose race has perished, is mainly intended to designate the remote period of the world in which the tale is cast.

For the son of Osslah was small in stature and of slender strength, and his step had halted from his birth; but he passed through the warriors unheedingly. At the outskirts of the city he came upon a tall pile in which some old men dwelt by themselves, and counselled the king when times of danger, or when the failure of the season, the famine or the drought, perplexed the ruler, and clouded the savage fronts of his warrior tribe.

They gave the counsels of experience, and when experience failed, they drew, in their believing ignorance, assurances and omens from the winds of heaven, the changes of the moon, and the flights of the wandering birds. Filled (by the voices of the elements, and the variety of mysteries, which ever shift along the face of things, unsolved by the wonder which pauses not, the fear which believes, and that eternal reasoning of all experience, which assigns causes to effect) with the notion of superior powers, they assisted their ignorance by the conjectures of their superstition. But as yet they knew no craft and practised no *voluntary* delusion; they trembled too much at the mysteries which had created their faith to seek to belie them. They counselled as they believed, and the bold dream of governing their warriors and their kings by the wisdom of deceit had never dared to cross men thus worn and grey with age.

The son of Osslah entered the vast pile with a fearless step, and approached the place at the upper end of the hall where the old men sat in conclave.

"How, base-born and craven-limbed!" cried the eldest, who had been a noted warror in his day; "darest thou enter unsummoned amidst the secret councils of the wise men? Knowest thou not, scatterling! that the penalty is death?"

"Slay me, if thou wilt," answered Morven, "but hear! As I sat last night in the ruined palace of our ancient kings, tending, as my father bade me, the sheep that grazed around, lest the fierce tribe of Alrich should descend unseen from the mountains upon the herd, a storm came darkly on;

and when the storm had ceased and I looked above on the sky, I saw a star descend from its height towards me, and a voice from the star said, 'Son of Osslah, leave thy herd and seek the council of the wise men and say unto them, that they take thee as one of their number, or that sudden will be the destruction of them and theirs.' But I had courage to answer the voice, and I said, 'Mock not the poor son of the herdsman. Behold they will kill me if I utter so rash a word, for I am poor and valueless in the eyes of the tribe of Oestrich, and the great in deeds and the grey of hair alone sit in the council of the wise men.'

"Then the voice said, 'Do my bidding, and I will give thee a token that thou comest from the Powers that sway the seasons and sail upon the eagles of the winds. Say unto the wise men this very night if they refuse to receive thee of their band, evil shall fall upon them, and the morrow shall dawn in blood.

"Then the voice ceased, and the cloud passed over the star; and I communed with myself, and came, O dread father, mournfully unto you. For I feared that ye would smite me because of my bold tongue, and that ye would sentence me to the death, in that I asked what may scarce be given even to the sons of kings."

Then the grim elders looked one at the other, and marvelled much, nor knew they what answer they should make to the herdsman's son.

At length one of the wise men said, "Surely there must be truth in the son of Osslah, for he would not dare to falsify the great lights of Heaven. If he had given unto men the words of the star, verily we might doubt the truth. But who would brave the vengeance of the gods of night?"

Then the elders shook their heads approvingly; but one answered and said:

"Shall we take the herdsman's son as our equal? No!" The name of the man who thus answered was Darvan, and his words were pleasing to the elders.

But Morven spoke out: "Of a truth, O councillors of

kings! I look not to be an equal with yourselves. Enough if I tend the gates of your palace, and serve you as the son of Osslah may serve;" and he bowed his head humbly as he spoke.

Then said the chief of the elders, for he was wiser than the others, "But how wilt thou deliver us from the evil that is to come? Doubtless the star has informed thee of the service thou canst render to us if we take thee into our palace, as well as the ill that will fall on us if we refuse."

Morven answered meekly, "Surely, if thou acceptest thy servant, the star will teach him that which may requite thee; but as yet he knows only what he has uttered."

Then the sages bade him withdraw, and they communed with themselves, and they differed much; but though fierce men, and bold at the war-cry of a human foe, they shuddered at the prophecy of a star. So they resolved to take the son of Osslah, and suffer him to keep the gate of the council-hall.

He heard their decree and bowed his head, and went to the gate, and sat down by it in silence.

And the sun went down in the west, and the first stars of the twilight began to glimmer, when Morven started from his seat, and a trembling appeared to seize his limbs. His lips foamed; an agony and a fear possessed him; he writhed as a man whom the spear of a foeman has pierced with a mortal wound, and suddenly fell upon his face on the stony earth.

The elders approached him; wondering, they lifted him up. He slowly recovered as from a swoon; his eyes rolled wildly.

"Heard ye not the voice of the star?" he said.

And the chief of the elders answered, "Nay, we heard no sound."

Then Morven sighed heavily.

"To me only the word was given. Summon instantly, O councillors of the king! summon the armed men, and all the youth of the tribe, and let them take the sword and the

spear, and follow thy servant. For lo! the star hath announced to him that the foe shall fall into our hands as the wild beasts of the forests."

The son of Osslah spoke with the voice of command, and the elders were amazed. "Why pause ye?" he cried. "Do the gods of the night lie? On my head rest the peril if I deceive ye."

Then the elders communed together; and they went forth and summoned the men of arms, and all the young of the tribe; and each man took the sword and the spear, and Morven also. And the son of Osslah walked first, still looking up at the star, and he motioned them to be silent, and moved with a stealthy step.

So they went through the thickest of the forest, till they came to the mouth of a great cave, overgrown with aged and matted trees, and it was called the Cave of Oderlin; and he bade the leaders place the armed men on either side the cave, to the right and to the left, among the bushes.

So they watched silently till the night deepened, when they heard a noise in the cave and the sound of feet, and forth came an armed man; and the spear of Morven pierced him, and he fell dead at the mouth of the cave. Another and another, and both fell! Then loud and long was heard the war-cry of Alrich, and forth poured, as a stream over a narrow bed, the river of armed men. And the sons of Oestrich fell upon them, and the foe were sorely perplexed and terrified by the suddenness of the battle and the darkness of the night; and there was a great slaughter.

And when the morning came the children of Oestrich counted the slain, and found the leader of Alrich and the chief men of the tribe amongst them, and great was the joy thereof. So they went back in triumph to the city, and they carried the brave son of Osslah on their shoulders, and shouted forth, "Glory to the servant of the star."

And Morven dwelt in the council of the wise men.

Now the king of the tribe had one daughter, and she

was stately amongst the women of the tribe, and fair to look upon. And Morven gazed upon her with the eyes of love, but he did not dare to speak.

Now the son of Osslah laughed secretly at the foolishness of men; he loved them not, for they had mocked him; he honoured them not, for he had blinded the wisest of their leaders. He shunned their feasts and merriment, and lived apart and solitary. The austerity of his life increased the mysterious homage which his commune with the stars had won him, and the boldest of the warriors bowed his head to the favourite of the gods.

One day he was wandering by the side of the river, and he saw a large bird of prey rise from the waters, and give chase to a hawk that had not yet gained the full strength of its wings. From his youth the solitary Morven had loved to watch, in the great forests and by the banks of the mighty stream, the habits of the things which nature has submitted to man; and looking now on the birds, he said to himself, "Thus is it ever; by cunning or by strength each thing wishes to master its kind." While thus moralising, the larger bird had stricken down the hawk, and it fell terrified and panting at his feet. Morven took the hawk in his hands, and the vulture shrieked above him, wheeling nearer and nearer to its protected prey; but Morven scared away the vulture, and placing the hawk in his bosom he carried it home, and tended it carefully, and fed it from his hand until it had regained its strength; and the hawk knew him, and followed him as a dog. And Morven said, smiling to himself, "Behold, the credulous fools around me put faith in the flight and motion of birds. I will teach this poor hawk to minister to my ends." So he tamed the bird, and tutored it according to its nature; but he concealed it carefully from others, and cherished it in secret.

The king of the country was old and like to die, and the eyes of the tribe were turned to his two sons, nor knew they which was the worthier to reign. And Morven pass-

ing through the forest one evening, saw the younger of the two, who was a great hunter, sitting mournfully under an oak, and looking with musing eyes upon the ground.

"Wherefore musest thou, O swift-footed Siror?" said the son of Osslah; "and wherefore art thou sad?"

"Thou canst not assist me," answered the prince, sternly; "take thy way."

"Nay," answered Morven, "thou knowest not what thou sayest; am I not the favourite of the stars?"

"Away, I am no greybeard whom the approach of death makes doting: talk not to me of the stars; I know only the things that my eye sees and my ear drinks in."

"Hush," said Morven, solemnly, and covering his face; "hush! lest the heavens avenge thy rashness. But, behold the stars have given unto me to pierce the secret hearts of others; and I can tell thee the thoughts of thine."

"Speak out, base-born!"

"Thou art the younger of two, and thy name is less known in war than the name of thy brother: yet wouldst thou desire to be set over his head, and to sit on the high seat of thy father?"

The young man turned pale. "Thou hast truth in thy lips," said he, with a faltering voice.

"Not from me, but from the stars, descends the truth."

"Can the stars grant my wish?"

"They can: let us meet to-morrow." Thus saying, Morven passed into the forest.

The next day, at noon, they met again.

"I have consulted the gods of night, and they have given me the power that I prayed for, but on one condition."

"Name it."

"That thou sacrifice thy sister on their altars; thou must build up a heap of stones, and take thy sister into the wood, and lay her on the pile, and plunge thy sword into her heart; so only shalt thou reign."

The prince shuddered, and started to his feet, and shook his spear at the pale front of Morven.

"Tremble," said the son of Osslah, with a loud voice. "Hark to the gods who threaten thee with death, that thou hast dared to lift thine arm against their servant!"

As he spoke, the thunder rolled above; for one of the frequent storms of the early summer was about to break. The spear dropped from the prince's hand; he sat down, and cast his eyes on the ground.

"Wilt thou do the bidding of the stars, and reign?" said Morven.

"I will!" cried Siror, with a desperate voice.

"This evening, then, when the sun sets, thou wilt lead her hither, alone; I may not attend thee. Now, let us pile the stones."

Silently the huntsman bent his vast strength to the fragments of rock that Morven pointed to him, and they built the altar, and went their way.

And beautiful is the dying of the great sun, when the last song of the birds fades into the lap of silence; when the islands of the cloud are bathed in light, and the first star springs up over the grave of day!

"Whither leadest thou my steps, my brother?" said Orna; "and why doth thy lip quiver? and why dost thou turn away thy face?"

"Is not the forest beautiful; does it not tempt us forth, my sister?"

"And wherefore are those heaps of stone piled together?"

"Let others answer; *I* piled them not."

"Thou tremblest, brother: we will return."

"Not so; by these stones is a bird that my shaft pierced to-day; a bird of beautiful plumage that I slew for thee."

"We are by the pile: where hast thou laid the bird?"

"Here!" cried Siror; and he seized the maiden in his arms, and, casting her on the rude altar, he drew forth his sword to smite her to the heart.

Right over the stones rose a giant oak, the growth of immemorial ages; and from the oak, or from the heavens, broke forth a loud and solemn voice, "Strike not, son of

kings! the stars forbear their own: the maiden thou shalt not slay; yet shalt thou reign over the race of Oestrich; and thou shalt give Orna as a bride to the favourite of the stars. Arise, and go thy way!"

The voice ceased: the terror of Orna had overpowered for a time the springs of life; and Siror bore her home through the wood in his strong arms.

"Alas!" said Morven, when, at the next day, he again met the aspiring prince; "alas! the stars have ordained me a lot which my heart desires not: for I, lonely of life, and crippled of shape, am insensible to the fires of love; and ever, as thou and thy tribe know, I have shunned the eyes of women, for the maidens laughed at my halting step and my sullen features; and so in my youth I learned betimes to banish all thoughts of love. But since they told me (as they declared to *thee*), that only through that marriage, thou, O beloved prince! canst obtain thy father's plumed crown I yield me to their will."

"But," said the prince, "not until I am king can I give thee my sister in marriage; for thou knowest that my sire would smite me to the dust if I asked him to give the flower of our race to the son of the herdsman Osslah."

"Thou speakest the words of truth. Go home and fear not: but, when thou art king, the sacrifice must be made, and Orna mine. Alas! how can I dare to lift mine eyes to her! But so ordain the dread kings of the night!—who shall gainsay their word?"

"The day that sees me king sees Orna thine," answered the prince.

Morven walked forth, as was his wont, alone; and he said to himself, "The king is old, yet may he live long between me and mine hope!" and he began to cast in his mind how he might shorten the time. Thus absorbed, he wandered on so unheedingly that night advanced, and he had lost his path among the thick woods and knew not how to regain his home: so he lay down quietly beneath a tree, and rested till day dawned; then hunger came upon him,

and he searched among the bushes for such simple roots as those with which, for he was ever careless of food, he was used to appease the cravings of nature.

He found, among other more familiar herbs and roots, a red berry of a sweetish taste, which he had never observed before. He ate of it sparingly, and had not proceeded far in the wood before he found his eyes swim, and a deadly sickness came over him. For several hours he lay convulsed on the ground expecting death; but the gaunt spareness of his frame, and his unvarying abstinence, prevailed over the poison, and he recovered slowly, and after great anguish: but he went with feeble steps back to the spot where the berries grew, and, plucking several, hid them in his bosom, and by nightfall regained the city.

The next day he went forth among his father's herds, and seizing a lamb, forced some of the berries into his stomach, and the lamb, escaping, ran away, and fell down dead. Then Morven took some more of the berries and boiled them down, and mixed the juice with wine, and he gave the wine in secret to one of his father's servants, and the servant died.

Then Morven sought the king, and coming into his presence, alone, he said unto him, "How fares my lord?"

The king sat on a couch made of the skins of wolves, and his eye was glassy and dim; but vast were his aged limbs, and huge was his stature, and he had been taller by a head than the children of men, and none living could bend the bow he had bent in youth. Grey, gaunt, and worn, as some mighty bones that are dug at times from the bosom of the earth,—a relic of the strength of old.

And the king said, faintly, and with a ghastly laugh:

"The men of my years fare ill. What avails my strength? Better had I been born a cripple like thee, so should I have had nothing to lament in growing old."

The red flush passed over Morven's brow; but he bent humbly:

"O king, what if I could give thee back thy youth? what

if I could restore to thee the vigour which distinguished thee above the sons of men, when the warriors of Alrich fell like grass before thy sword?"

Then the king uplifted his dull eyes, and he said:

"What meanest thou, son of Osslah? Surely I hear much of thy great wisdom, and how thou speakest nightly with the stars. Can the gods of the night give unto thee the secret to make the old young?"

"Tempt them not by doubt," said Morven, reverently. "All things are possible to the rulers of the dark hour; and lo! the star that loves thy servant spake to him at the dead of night, and said, 'Arise, and go unto the king; and tell him that the stars honour the tribe of Oestrich, and remember how the king bent his bow against the sons of Alrich; wherefore, look thou under the stone that lies to the right of thy dwelling—even beside the pine tree, and thou shalt see a vessel of clay, and in the vessel thou wilt find a sweet liquid, that shall make the king thy master forget his age for ever.' Therefore, my lord, when the morning rose I went forth, and looked under the stone, and behold the vessel of clay; and I have brought it hither to my lord the king."

"Quick—slave—quick! that I may drink and regain my youth!"

"Nay, listen, O king! farther said the star to me:

"'It is only at night, when the stars have power, that this their gift will avail; wherefore, the king must wait till the hush of the midnight, when the moon is high, and then may he mingle the liquid with his wine. And he must reveal to none that he hath received the gift from the hand of the servant of the stars. For THEY do their work in secret, and when men sleep; therefore they love not the babble of mouths, and he who reveals their benefits shall surely die.'"

"Fear not," said the king, grasping the vessel; "none shall know: and, behold, I will rise on the morrow; and my two sons—wrangling for my crown,—verily I shall be younger than they!"

Then the king laughed loud; and he scarcely thanked the servant of the stars, neither did he promise him reward: for the kings in those days had little thought,—save for themselves.

And Morven said to him, "Shall I not attend my lord? for without me, perchance, the drug might fail of its effect."

"Ay," said the king, "rest here."

"Nay," replied Morven; "thy servants will marvel and talk much, if they see the son of Osslah sojourning in thy palace. So would the displeasure of the gods of night perchance be incurred. Suffer that the lesser door of the palace be unbarred, so that at the night hour, when the moon is midway in the heavens, I may steal unseen into thy chamber, and mix the liquid with thy wine."

"So be it," said the king. "Thou art wise, though thy limbs are crooked and curt; and the stars might have chosen a taller man." Then the king laughed again; and Morven laughed too, but there was danger in the mirth of the son of Osslah.

The night had begun to wane, and the inhabitants of Oestrich were buried in deep sleep, when, hark! a sharp voice was heard crying out in the streets, "Woe, woe! Awake, ye sons of Oestrich—woe!" Then forth, wild—haggard—alarmed—spear in hand, rushed the giant sons of the rugged tribe, and they saw a man on a height in the middle of the city, shrieking "Woe!", and it was Morven, the son of Osslah! And he said unto them, as they gathered round him, "Men and warriors, tremble as ye hear. The star of the west hath spoken to me, and thus said the star: 'Evil shall fall upon the kingly house of Oestrich,—yea, ere the morning dawn; wherefore, go thou mourning into the streets, and wake the inhabitants to woe!' So I rose and did the bidding of the star." And while Morven was yet speaking, a servant of the king's house ran up to the crowd, crying loudly, "The king is dead!" So they went into the palace and found the king stark upon his couch, and his huge limbs all cramped and

crippled by the pangs of death, and his hands clenched as if in menace of a foe—the Foe of all living flesh! Then fear came on the gazers, and they looked on Morven with a deeper awe than the boldest warrior would have called forth; and they bore him back to the council-hall of the wise men, wailing and clashing their arms in woe, and shouting, ever and anon, "Honour to Morven the prophet!" And that was the first time the word PROPHET was ever used in those countries.

At noon, on the third day from the king's death, Siror sought Morven, and he said, "Lo, my father is no more, and the people meet this evening at sunset to elect his successor, and the warriors and the young men will surely choose my brother, for he is more known in war. Fail me not therefore."

"Peace, boy!" said Morven, sternly; "nor dare to question the truth of the gods of night."

For Morven now began to presume on his power among the people, and to speak as rulers speak, even to the sons of kings. And the voice silenced the fiery Siror, nor dared he to reply.

"Behold," said Morven, taking up a chaplet of coloured plumes, "wear this on thy head, and put on a brave face, for the people like a hopeful spirit, and go down with thy brother to the place where the new king is to be chosen, and leave the rest to the stars. But, above all things, forget not that chaplet; it has been blessed by the gods of night."

The prince took the chaplet and returned home.

It was evening, and the warriors and chiefs of the tribe were assembled in the place where the new king was to be elected. And the voices of the many favoured Prince Voltoch, the brother of Siror, for he had slain twelve foemen with his spear; and verily, in those days, that was a great virtue in a king.

Suddenly there was a shout in the streets, and the people cried out, "Way for Morven the prophet, the prophet!" For the people held the son of Osslah in even greater re-

spect than did the chiefs. Now, since he had become of note, Morven had assumed a majesty of air which the son of the herdsman knew not in his earlier days; and albeit his stature was short, and his limbs halted, yet his countenance was grave and high. He only of the tribe wore a garment that swept the ground, and his head was bare and his long black hair descended to his girdle, and rarely was change or human passion seen in his calm aspect. He feasted not, nor drank wine, nor was his presence frequent in the streets. He laughed not, neither did he smile, save when alone in the forest,—and then he laughed at the follies of his tribe.

So he walked slowly through the crowd, neither turning to the left nor to the right, as the crowd gave way; and he supported his steps with a staff of the knotted pine.

And when he came to the place where the chiefs were met, and the two princes stood in the centre, he bade the people around him proclaim silence; then mounting on a huge fragment of rock, he thus spake to the multitude:

"Princes, Warriors, and Bards! ye, O council of the wise men! and ye, O hunters of the forests and snarers of the fishes of the streams! hearken to Morven, the son of Osslah. Ye know that I am lowly of race and weak of limb; but did I not give into your hands the tribe of Alrich, and did ye not slay them in the dead of night with a great slaughter? Surely, ye must know this of himself did not the herdsman's son; surely he was but the agent of the bright gods that love the children of Oestrich? Three nights since, when slumber was on the earth, was not my voice heard in the streets! Did I not proclaim woe to the kingly house of Oestrich! and verily the dark arm had fallen on the bosom of the mighty that is no more. Could I have dreamed this thing merely in a dream, or was I not as the voice of the bright gods that watch over the tribes of Oestrich? Wherefore, O men and chiefs! scorn not the son of Osslah, but listen to his words; for are they not the wisdom of the stars? Behold, last night, I sat alone in the

valley, and the trees were hushed around and not a breath stirred; and I looked upon the star that counsels the son of Osslah; and I said, 'Dread conqueror of the cloud! thou that bathest thy beauty in the streams and piercest the pine-boughs with thy presence; behold thy servant grieved because the mighty one hath passed away, and many foes surround the houses of my brethren; and it is well that they should have a king valiant and prosperous in war, the cherished of the stars. Wherefore, O star! as thou gavest into our hands the warriors of Alrich, and didst warn us of the fall of the oak of our tribe, wherefore I pray thee give unto the people a token that they may choose that king whom the gods of the night prefer!' Then a low voice, sweeter than the music of the bard, stole along the silence. 'Thy love for thy race is grateful to the stars of night: go, then, son of Osslah, and seek the meeting of the chiefs and the people to choose a king, and tell them not to scorn thee because thou art slow to the chase, and little known in war; for the stars give thee wisdom as a recompense for all. Say unto the people that as the wise men of the council shape their lessons by the flight of birds, so by the flight of birds shall a token be given unto them, and they shall choose their kings. For, saith the star of night, the birds are the children of the winds, they pass to and fro along the ocean of the air, and visit the clouds that are the war-ships of the gods. And their music is but broken melodies which they glean from the harps above. Are they not the messengers of the storm? Ere the stream chafes against the bank, and the rain descends, know ye not, by the wail of birds and their low circle over the earth, that the tempest is at hand? Wherefore, wisely do ye deem that the children of the air are the fit interpreters between the sons of men and the lords of the world above. Say then to the people and the chiefs, that they shall take, from among the doves that build their nests in the roof of the palace, a white dove, and they shall let it loose in the air, and verily the gods of the night shall deem the dove as a prayer com-

ing from the people, and they shall send a messenger to grant the prayer and give to the tribes of Oestrich a king worthy of themselves.'

"With that the star spoke no more."

Then the friends of Voltoch murmured among themselves, and they said, "Shall this man dictate to us who shall be king?" But the people and the warriors shouted, "Listen to the star; do we not give or deny battle according as the bird flies,—shall we not by the same token choose him by whom the battle should be led?" And the thing seemed natural to them, for it was after the custom of the tribe. Then they took one of the doves that built in the roof of the palace, and they brought it to the spot where Morven stood, and he, looking up to the stars and muttering to himself, released the bird.

There was a copse of trees at a little distance from the spot, and as the dove ascended, a hawk suddenly rose from the copse and pursued the dove; and the dove was terrified, and soared circling high above the crowd, when lo, the hawk, poising itself one moment on its wings, swooped with a sudden swoop, and, abandoning its prey, alighted on the plumed head of Siror.

"Behold," cried Morven in a loud voice, "behold your king!"

"Hail, all hail the king!" shouted the people. "All hail the chosen of the stars!"

Then Morven lifted his right hand, and the hawk left the prince and alighted on Morven's shoulder. "Bird of the gods!" said he, reverently, "hast thou not a secret message for my ear?" Then the hawk put its beak to Morven's ear, and Morven bowed his head submissively; and the hawk rested with Morven from that moment and would not be scared away. And Morven said, "The stars have sent me this bird, that in the day-time when I see them not, we may never be without a councillor in distress."

So Siror was made king, and Morven the son of Osslah

was constrained by the king's will to take Orna for his wife; and the people and the chiefs honoured Morven the prophet above all the elders of the tribe.

One day Morven said unto himself, musing, "Am I not already equal with the king? nay, is not the king my servant? did I not place him over the heads of his brothers? am I not, therefore, more fit to reign than he is? shall I not push him from his seat? It is a troublesome and stormy office to reign over the wild men of Oestrich, to feast in the crowded hall, and to lead the warriors to the fray. Surely if I feasted not, neither went out to war, they might say, this is no king, but the cripple Morven; and some of the race of Siror might slay me secretly. But can I not be greater far than kings, and continue to choose and govern them, living as now at mine own ease? Verily the stars shall give me a new palace, and many subjects."

Among the wise men was Darvan; and Morven feared him, for his eye often sought the movements of the son of Osslah.

And Morven said, "It were better to *trust* this man than to *blind*, for surely I want a helpmate and a friend." So he said to the wise man as he sat alone watching the setting sun:

"It seemeth to me, O Darvan! that we ought to build a great pile in honour of the stars, and the pile should be more glorious than all the palaces of the chiefs and the palace of the king; for are not the stars our masters? And thou and I should be the chief dwellers in this new palace, and we would serve the gods of night and fatten their altars with the choicest of the herd and the freshest of the fruits of the earth."

And Darvan said, "Thou speakest as becomes the servant of the stars. But will the people help to build the pile? for they are a warlike race and they love not toil."

And Morven answered, "Doubtless the stars will ordain the work to be done. Fear not."

"In truth thou art a wondrous man; thy words ever come

to pass," answered Darvan; "and I wish thou wouldst teach me, friend, the language of the stars."

"Assuredly if thou servest me, thou shalt know," answered the proud Morven; and Darvan was secretly wroth that the son of the herdsman should command the service of an elder and a chief.

And when Morven returned to his wife he found her weeping much. Now she loved the son of Osslah with an exceeding love, for he was not savage and fierce as the men she had known, and she was proud of his fame among the tribe; and he took her in his arms and kissed her, and asked her why she wept. Then she told him that her brother the king had visited her, and had spoken bitter words of Morven: "He taketh from me the affection of my people," said Siror, "and blindeth them with lies. And since he hath made me king, what if he take my kingdom from me? Verily a new tale of the stars might undo the old." And the king had ordered her to keep watch on Morven's secrecy, and to see whether truth was in him when he boasted of his commune with the Powers of Night.

But Orna loved Morven better than Siror, therefore she told her husband all.

And Morven resented the king's ingratitude, and was troubled much, for a king is a powerful foe; but he comforted Orna, and bade her dissemble, and complain also of him to her brother, so that he might confide to her unsuspectingly whatsoever he might design against Morven.

There was a cave by Morven's house in which he kept the sacred hawk, and wherein he secretly trained and nurtured other birds against future need, and the door of the cave was always barred. And one day he was thus engaged when he beheld a chink in the wall that he had never noted before, and the sun came playfully in; and while he looked he perceived the sunbeam was darkened, and presently he saw a human face peering in through the chink. And Morven trembled, for he knew he had been watched. He ran hastily from the cave, but the spy had disappeared among

the trees, and Morven went straight to the chamber of Darvan and sat himself down. And Darvan did not return home till late, and he started and turned pale when he saw Morven. But Morven greeted him as a brother, and bade him to a feast, which, for the first time, he purposed giving at the full of the moon, in honour of the stars. And going out of Darvan's chamber he returned to his wife, and bade her rend her hair, and go at the dawn of day to the king her brother, and complain bitterly of Morven's treatment, and pluck the black plans from the breast of the king. "For surely," said he, "Darvan hath lied to thy brother, and some evil waits me that I would fain know."

So the next morning Orna sought the king, and she said, "The herdsman's son hath reviled me, and spoken harsh words to me; shall I not be avenged?"

Then the king stamped his feet and shook his mighty sword. "Surely thou shalt be avenged, for I have learned from one of the elders that which convinceth me that the man hath lied to the people, and the base-born shall surely die. Yea, the first time that he goeth alone into the forest my brother and I will fall upon him and smite him to the death." And with this comfort Siror dismissed Orna.

And Orna flung herself at the feet of her husband. "Fly now, O my beloved!—fly into the forests afar from thy brethren, or surely the sword of Siror will end thy days."

Then the son of Osslah folded his arms, and seemed buried in black thoughts; nor did he heed the voice of Orna, until again and again she had implored him to fly.

"Fly!" he said at length. "Nay, I was doubting what punishment the stars should pour down upon our foe. Let warriors fly. Morven the prophet conquers by arms mightier than the sword."

Nevertheless Morven was perplexed in his mind, and knew not how to save himself from the vengeance of the king. Now, while he was musing hopelessly he heard a roar of waters; and behold, the river, for it was now the end of autumn, had burst its bounds, and was rushing along

the valley to the houses of the city. And now the men of the tribe, and the women, and the children, came running and with shrieks to Morven's house crying, "Behold, the river has burst upon us!—Save us, O ruler of the stars!"

Then the sudden thought broke upon Morven, and he resolved to risk his fate upon one desperate scheme.

And he came out from the house calm and sad, and he said, "Ye know not what ye ask; I cannot save ye from this peril: ye have brought it on yourselves." And they cried, "How? O son of Osslah!—we are ignorant of our crime."

And he answered, "Go down to the king's palace and wait before it, and surely I will follow ye, and ye shall learn wherefore ye have incurred this punishment from the gods." Then the crowd rolled murmuring back, as a receding sea; and when it was gone from the place, Morven went alone to the house of Darvan, which was next his own: and Darvan was greatly terrified; for he was of a great age, and had no children, neither friends, and he feared that he could not of himself escape the waters.

And Morven said to him soothingly, "Lo, the people love me, and I will see that thou art saved; for verily thou hast been friendly to me, and done me much service with the king."

And as he thus spake, Morven opened the door of the house and looked forth, and saw that they were quite alone; then he seized the old man by the throat and ceased not his gripe till he was quite dead. And leaving the body of the elder on the floor, Morven stole from the house and shut the gate. And as he was going to his cave he mused a little while, when, hearing the mighty roar of the waves advancing, and far off the shrieks of women, he lifted up his head and said, proudly, "No, in this hour terror alone shall be my slave; I will use no art save the power of my soul." So, leaning on his pine-staff, he strode down to the palace. And it was now evening, and many of the men held torches, that they might see each other's faces in the

universal fear. Red flashed the quivering flames on the dark robes and pale front of Morven; and he seemed mightier than the rest, because his face alone was calm amidst the tumult. And louder and hoarser became the roar of the waters; and swift rushed the shades of night over the hastening tide.

And Morven said in a stern voice, "Where is the king? and wherefore is he absent from his people in the hour of dread?" Then the gate of the palace opened, and, behold, Siror was sitting in the hall by the vast pine-fire, and his brother by his side, and his chiefs around him: for they would not deign to come amongst the crowd at the bidding of the herdsman's son.

Then Morven, standing upon a rock above the heads of the people (the same rock whereon he had proclaimed the king), thus spake:

"Ye desired to know, O sons of Oestrich! wherefore the river hath burst its bounds, and the peril hath come upon you. Learn, then, that the stars resent as the foulest of human crimes an insult to their servants and delegates below. Ye are all aware of the manner of life of Morven, whom ye have surnamed the Prophet! He harms not man nor beast; he lives alone; and, far from the wild joys of the warrior tribe, he worships in awe and fear the Powers of Night. So is he able to advise ye of the coming danger,—so is he able to save ye from the foe. Thus are your huntsmen swift and your warriors bold; and thus do your cattle bring forth their young, and earth its fruits. What think ye, and what do ye ask to hear? Listen, men of Oestrich!—they have laid snares for my life; and there are amongst you those who have whetted the sword against the bosom that is only filled with love for you all. Therefore have the stern lords of heaven loosened the chains of the river—therefore doth this evil menace ye. Neither will it pass away until they who dug the pit for the servant of the stars are buried in the same."

Then, by the red torches, the faces of the men looked

fierce and threatening; and ten thousand voices shouted forth, "Name them who conspired against thy life, O holy prophet! and surely they shall be torn limb from limb."

And Morven turned aside, and they saw that he wept bitterly; and he said:

"Ye have asked me, and I have answered: but now scarce will ye believe the foe that I have provoked against me; and by the heavens themselves I swear, that if my death would satisfy their fury, nor bring down upon yourselves and your children's children the anger of the throned stars, gladly would I give my bosom to the knife. Yes," he cried, lifting up his voice, and pointing his shadowy arm towards the hall where the king sat by the pine-fire—"yes, thou whom by my voice the stars chose above thy brother—yes, Siror, the guilty one! take thy sword, and come hither—strike, if thou hast the heart to strike, the Prophet of the Gods!"

The king started to his feet, and the crowd were hushed in a shuddering silence.

Morven resumed:

"Know then, O men of Oestrich! that Siror and Voltoch his brother, and Darvan the elder of the wise men, have purposed to slay your prophet, even at such hour as when alone he seeks the shade of the forest to devise new benefits for you. Let the king deny it, if he can!"

Then Voltoch, of the giant limbs, strode forth from the hall and his spear quivered in his hand.

"Rightly hast thou spoken, base son of my father's herdsman! and for thy sins shalt thou surely die; for thou liest when thou speakest of thy power with the stars, and thou laughest at the folly of them who hear thee: wherefore put him to death."

Then the chiefs in the hall clashed their arms, and rushed forth to slay the son of Osslah.

But he, stretching his unarmed hands on high, exclaimed, "Hear him, O dread ones of the night!—hark, how he blasphemeth!"

Then the crowd took up the word, and cried, "He blasphemeth—he blasphemeth against the prophet!"

But the king and the chiefs, who hated Morven because of his power with the people, rushed into the crowd; and the crowd were irresolute, nor knew they how to act, for never yet had they rebelled against their chiefs, and they feared alike the prophet and the king.

And Siror cried, "Summon Darvan to us, for he hath watched the steps of Morven, and he shall lift the veil from my people's eyes." Then three of the swift of foot started forth to the house of Darvan.

And Morven cried out with a loud voice, "Hark! thus saith the star who, now riding through yonder cloud, breaks forth upon my eyes: 'For the lie that the elder hath uttered against my servant, the curse of the stars shall fall upon him.' Seek, and as ye find him so may ye find ever the foes of Morven and the gods!"

A chill and an icy fear fell over the crowd, and even the cheek of Siror grew pale; and Morven, erect and dark above the waving torches, stood motionless with folded arms. And hark!—far and fast came on the war-steeds of the wave—the people heard them marching to the land, and tossing their white manes in the roaring wind.

"Lo, as ye listen," said Morven, calmly, "the river sweeps on. Haste, for the gods will have a victim, be it your prophet or your king."

"Slave!" shouted Siror, and his spear left his hand, and far above the heads of the crowd sped hissing beside the dark form of Morven, and rent the trunk of the oak behind. Then the people, wroth at the danger of their beloved seer, uttered a wild yell, and gathered round him with brandished swords, facing their chieftains and their king. But at that instant, ere the war had broken forth among the tribe, the three warriors returned, and they bore Darvan on their shoulders, and laid him at the feet of the king, and they said tremblingly, "Thus found we the elder in the centre of his own hall." And the people saw that Darvan was a

corpse, and that the prediction of Morven was thus verified. "So perish the enemies of Morven and the stars!" cried the son of Osslah. And the people echoed the cry. Then the fury of Siror was at its height, and waving his sword above his head he plunged into the crowd, "Thy blood, baseborn, or mine!"

"So be it!" answered Morven, quailing not. "People, smite the blasphemer! Hark how the river pours down upon your children and your hearths! On, on, or ye perish!"

And Siror fell, pierced by five hundred spears.

"Smite! smite!" cried Morven, as the chiefs of the royal house gathered round the king. And the clash of swords, and the gleam of spears, and the cries of the dying, and the yell of the trampling people, mingled with the roar of the elements and the voices of the rushing wave.

Three hundred of the chiefs perished that night by the swords of their own tribe. And the last cry of the victors was, "Morven the prophet,—*Morven the king!*"

And the son of Osslah, seeing the waves now spreading over the valley, led Orna his wife, and the men of Oestrich, their women, and their children, to a high mount, where they waited the dawning sun. But Orna sat apart and wept bitterly, for her brothers were no more, and her race had perished from the earth. And Morven sought to comfort her in vain.

When the morning rose, they saw that the river had overspread the greater part of the city, and now stayed its course among the hollows of the vale. Then Morven said to the people, "The star-kings are avenged, and their wrath appeased. Tarry only here until the waters have melted into the crevices of the soil." And on the fourth day they returned to the city, and no man dared to name another, save Morven, as the king.

But Morven retired into his cave and mused deeply; and then assembling the people, he gave them new laws; and he made them build a mighty temple in honour of the stars, and made them heap within it all that the tribe held most

precious. And he took unto him fifty children from the most famous of the tribe; and he took also ten from among the men who had served him best, and he ordained that they should serve the stars in the great temple: and Morven was their chief. And he put away the crown they pressed upon him, and he chose from among the elders a new king. And he ordained that henceforth the servants only of the stars in the great temple should elect the king and the rulers, and hold council, and proclaim war: but he suffered the king to feast, and to hunt, and to make merry in the banquet-halls. And Morven built altars in the temple, and was the first who, in the North, sacrificed the beast and the bird, and afterwards human flesh, upon the altars. And he drew auguries from the entrails of the victim, and made schools for the science of the prophet; and Morven's piety was the wonder of the tribe; in that he refused to be a king. And Morven the high priest was ten thousand times mightier than the king. He taught the people to till the ground and to sow the herb; and by his wisdom, and the valour that his prophecies instilled into men, he conquered all the neighbouring tribes. And the sons of Oestrich spread themselves over a mighty empire, and with them spread the name and the laws of Morven. And in every province which he conquered, he ordered them to build a temple to the stars.

But a heavy sorrow fell upon the fears of Morven. The sister of Siror bowed down her head, and survived not long the slaughter of her race. And she left Morven childless. And he mourned bitterly and as one distraught, for her only in the world had his heart the power to love. And he sat down and covered his face, saying:

"Lo! I have toiled and travailed; and never before in the world did man conquer what I have conquered. Verily the empire of the iron thews and the giant limbs is no more! I have founded a new power, that henceforth shall sway the lands;—the empire of a plotting brain and a commanding mind. But, behold! my fate is barren, and I

feel already that it will grow neither fruit nor tree as a shelter to mine old age. Desolate and lonely shall I pass unto my grave. O Orna! my beautiful! my loved! none were like unto thee, and to thy love do I owe my glory and my life! Would for thy sake, O sweet bird! that nestled in the dark cavern of my heart,—would for thy sake that thy brethren had been spared, for verily with my life would I have purchased thine. Alas! only when I lost thee did I find that thy love was dearer to me than the fear of others!" And Morven mourned night and day, and none might comfort him.

But from that time forth he gave himself solely up to the cares of his calling; and his nature and his affections, and whatever there was yet left soft in him, grew hard like stone; and he was a man without love, and he forbade love and marriage to the priest.

Now, in his latter years, there arose *other* prophets; for the world had grown wiser even by Morven's wisdom, and some did say unto themselves, "Behold Morven, the herdsman's son, is a king of kings: this did the stars for their servant; shall we not also be servants to the star?"

And they wore black garments like Morven, and went about prophesying of what the stars foretold them. And Morven was exceeding wroth; for he, more than other men, knew that the prophets lied; wherefore he went forth against them with the ministers of the temple, and he took them, and burned them by a slow fire: for thus said Morven to the people: "A true prophet hath honour, but *I* only am a true prophet;—to all false prophets there shall be surely death."

And the people applauded the piety of the son of Osslah.

And Morven educated the wisest of the children in the mysteries of the temple, so that they grew up to succeed him worthily.

And he died full of years and honour; and they carved his effigy on a mighty stone before the temple, and the

effigy endured for a thousand ages, and whoso looked on it trembled; for the face was calm with the calmness of unspeakable awe!

And Morven was the first mortal of the North that made Religion the stepping-stone to Power. Of a surety Morven was a great man!

It was the last night of the old year, and the stars sat, each upon his ruby throne, and watched with sleepless eyes upon the world. The night was dark and troubled, the dread winds were abroad, and fast and frequent hurried the clouds beneath the thrones of the kings of night. And ever and anon fiery meteors flashed along the depths of heaven, and were again swallowed up in the grave of darkness. But far below his brethren, and with a lurid haze around his orb, sat the discontented star that had watched over the hunters of the North.

And on the lowest abyss of space there was spread a thick and mighty gloom, from which, as from a caldron, rose columns of wreathing smoke; and still, when the great winds rested for an instant on their paths, voices of woe and laughter, mingled with shrieks, were heard booming from the abyss to the upper air.

And now, in the middest night, a vast figure rose slowly from the abyss, and its wings threw blackness over the world. High upward to the throne of the discontented star sailed the fearful shape, and the star trembled on his throne when the form stood before him face to face.

And the shape said, "Hail, brother!—all hail!"

"I know thee not," answered the star; "thou art not the archangel that visitest the kings of night."

And the shape laughed loud. "I am the fallen star of the morning!—I am Lucifer, thy brother! Hast thou not, O sullen king! served me and mine? and hast thou not wrested the earth from thy Lord who sittest above, and given it to me, by darkening the souls of men with the religion of fear? Wherefore come, brother, come;—thou

hast a throne prepared beside my own in the fiery gloom—Come! The heavens are no more for thee!"

Then the star rose from his throne, and descended to the side of Lucifer. For ever hath the spirit of discontent had sympathy with the soul of pride. And they sank slowly down to the gulf of gloom.

It was the first night of the new year, and the stars sat, each on his ruby throne, and watched with sleepless eyes upon the world. But sorrow dimmed the bright faces of the kings of night, for they mourned in silence and in fear for a fallen brother.

And the gates of the heaven of heavens flew open with a golden sound, and the swift archangel fled down on his silent wings; and the archangel gave to each of the stars, as before, the message of his Lord; and to each star was his appointed charge. And when the heraldry seemed done there came a laugh from the abyss of gloom, and half-way from the gulf rose the lurid shape of Lucifer the fiend!

"Thou countest thy flock ill, O radiant shepherd! Behold! one star is missing from the three thousand and ten!"

"Back to thy gulf, false Lucifer!—the throne of thy brother hath been filled."

And, lo! as the archangel spake, the stars beheld a young and all-lustrous stranger on the throne of the erring star; and his face was so soft to look upon, that the dimmest of human eyes might have gazed upon its splendour unabashed: but the dark fiend alone was dazzled by its lustre, and, with a yell that shook the flaming pillars of the universe, he plunged backward into the gloom.

Then, far and sweet from the arch unseen, came forth the voice of God:

"Behold! on the throne of the discontented star sits the star of Hope; and he that breathed into mankind the religion of Fear hath a successor in him who shall teach earth the religion of Love!"

And evermore the star of Fear dwells with Lucifer, and the star of Love keeps vigil in heaven!

CHAPTER XX.

GELNHAUSEN.—THE POWER OF LOVE IN SANCTIFIED PLACES.—A PORTRAIT OF FREDERICK BARBAROSSA.—THE AMBITION OF MEN FINDS NO ADEQUATE SYMPATHY IN WOMEN.

"You made me tremble for you more than once," said Gertrude to the student; "I feared you were about to touch upon ground really sacred, but your end redeemed all."

"The false religion always tries to counterfeit the garb, the language, the aspect of the true," answered the German: "for that reason, I purposely suffered my tale to occasion that very fear and anxiety you speak of, conscious that the most scrupulous would be contented when the whole was finished."

This German was one of a new school, of which England as yet knows nothing. We shall see hereafter what it will produce.

The student left them at Friedberg, and our travellers proceeded to Gelnhausen,—a spot interesting to lovers; for here Frederick the First was won by the beauty of Gela, and, in the midst of an island vale, he built the Imperial Palace, in honour of the lady of his love. This spot is, indeed, well chosen of itself: the mountains of the Rhinegebürg close it in with the green gloom of woods and the glancing waters of the Kinz.

"Still, wherever we go," said Trevylyan, "we find all tradition is connected with love; and history, for that reason, hallows less than romance."

"It is singular," said Vane, moralising, "that love makes but a small part of our actual lives, but is yet the master-key to our sympathies. The hardest of us, who laugh at the passion when they see it palpably before them, are arrested by some dim tradition of its existence in the past. It is as if life had few opportunities of bringing out certain

qualities within us, so that they always remain untold and dormant, susceptible to thought, but deaf to action."

"You refine and mystify too much," said Trevylyan, smiling; "none of us have any faculty, any passion, uncalled forth, if we have *really* loved, though but for a day."

Gertrude smiled, and drawing her arm within his, Trevylyan left Vane to philosophise on passion;—a fit occupation for one who had never felt it.

"Here let us pause," said Trevylyan, afterwards, as they visited the remains of the ancient palace, and the sun glittered on the scene, "to recall the old chivalric day of the gallant Barbarossa;—let us suppose him commencing the last great action of his life; let us picture him as setting out for the Holy Land. Imagine him issuing from those walls on his white charger; his fiery eye somewhat dimmed by years, and his hair blanched; but nobler from the impress of time itself;—the clang of arms; the tramp of steeds; banners on high; music pealing from hill to hill; the red cross and the nodding plume; the sun, as now glancing on yonder trees, and thence reflected from the burnished arms of the Crusaders;—but, Gela——"

"Ah," said Gertrude, "*she* must be no more; for she would have outlived her beauty, and have found that glory had now no rival in his breast. Glory consoles men for the death of the loved; but glory is infidelity to the living."

"Nay, not so, dearest Gertrude," said Trevylyan, quickly; "for my darling dream of Fame is the hope of laying its honours at your feet! And if ever, in future years, I should rise above the herd, I should only ask if *your* step were proud and *your* heart elated."

"I was wrong," said Gertrude, with tears in her eyes; "and for your sake I can be ambitious."

Perhaps there, too, she was mistaken; for one of the common disappointments of the heart is, that women have so rarely a sympathy in our better and higher aspirings. Their ambition is not for great things; they cannot under-

stand that desire "which scorns delight, and loves laborious days." If they love us, they usually exact too much. They are jealous of the ambition to which we sacrifice so largely, and which divides us from them; and they leave the stern passion of great minds to the only solitude which affection cannot share. To aspire is to be alone!

CHAPTER XXI.

VIEW OF EHRENBREITSTEIN. — A NEW ALARM IN GERTRUDE'S HEALTH.—TRARBACH.

Another time our travellers proceeded from Coblentz to Treves, following the course of the Moselle. They stopped on the opposite bank below the bridge that unites Coblentz with the Petersberg, to linger over the superb view of Ehrenbreitstein which you may there behold.

It was one of those calm noonday scenes which impress upon us their own bright and voluptuous tranquillity. There stood the old herdsman leaning on his staff, and the quiet cattle knee-deep in the gliding waters. Never did stream more smooth and sheen, than was at that hour the surface of the Moselle, mirror the images of the pastoral life. Beyond, the darker shadows of the bridge and of the walls of Coblentz fell deep over the waves, chequered by the tall sails of the craft that were moored around the harbour. But clear against the sun rose the spires and roofs of Coblentz, backed by many a hill sloping away to the horizon. High, dark, and massive, on the opposite bank, swelled the towers and rock of Ehrenbreitstein; a type of that great chivalric spirit—the honour that the rock arrogates for its name,—which demands so many sacrifices of blood and tears, but which ever creates in the restless heart of man a far deeper interest than the more peaceful scenes of life by which it is contrasted. There, still—from the calm waters, and the abodes of common toil and ordinary

pleasure—turns the aspiring mind! Still as we gaze on that lofty and immemorial rock we recall the famine and the siege; and own that the more daring crimes of men have a strange privilege in hallowing the very spot which they devastate.

Below, in green curves and mimic bays covered with herbage, the gradual banks mingled with the water; and just where the bridge closed, a solitary group of trees, standing dark in the thickest shadow, gave that melancholy feature to the scene which resembles the one dark thought that often forces itself into our sunniest hours. Their boughs stirred not; no voice of birds broke the stillness of their gloomy verdure: the eye turned from them, as from the sad moral that belongs to existence.

In proceeding to Trarbach, Gertrude was seized with another of those fainting fits which had so terrified Trevylyan before; they stopped an hour or two at a little village, but Gertrude rallied with such apparent rapidity, and so strongly insisted on proceeding, that they reluctantly continued their way. This event would have thrown a gloom over their journey, if Gertrude had not exerted herself to dispel the impression she had occasioned; and so light, so cheerful, were her spirits, that for the time at least she succeeded.

They arrived at Trarbach late at noon. This now small and humble town is said to have been the Thronus Bacchi of the ancients. From the spot where the travellers halted to take, as it were, their impression of the town, they saw before them the little hostelry, a poor pretender to the Thronus Bacchi, with the rude sign of the Holy Mother over the door. The peaked roof, the sunk window, the grey walls, chequered with the rude beams of wood so common to the meaner houses on the Continent, bore something of a melancholy and prepossessing aspect. Right above, with its Gothic windows and venerable spire, rose the church of the town; and, crowning the summit of a green and almost perpendicular mountain, scowled the remains of

one of those mighty castles which make the never-failing frown on a German landscape.

The scene was one of quiet and of gloom: the exceeding serenity of the day contrasted, with an almost unpleasing brightness, the poverty of the town, the thinness of the population, and the dreary grandeur of the ruins that overhung the capital of the perished race of the bold Counts of Spanheim.

They passed the night at Trarbach, and continued their journey next day. At Treves, Gertrude was for some days seriously ill; and when they returned to Coblentz, her disease had evidently received a rapid and alarming increase.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DOUBLE LIFE.—TREVYLYAN'S FATE.—SORROW THE PARENT OF FAME.—NIEDERLAHNSTEIN.—DREAMS.

There are two lives to each of us, gliding on at the same time, scarcely connected with each other!—the life of our actions, the life of our minds; the external and the inward history; the movements of the frame, the deep and ever-restless workings of the heart! They who have loved know that there is a diary of the affections, which we might keep for years without having occasion even to touch upon the exterior surface of life, our busy occupations—the mechanical progress of our existence; yet by the last are we judged, the first is never known. History reveals men's deeds, men's outward character, but *not themselves*. There is a secret self that hath its own life "rounded by a dream," unpenetrated, unguessed. What passed within Trevylyan, hour after hour, as he watched over the declining health of the only being in the world whom his proud heart had been ever destined to love! His real record of the time was marked by every cloud upon Gertrude's brow, every smile of her countenance, every—the faintest—alteration in her

disease: yet, to the outward seeming, all this vast current of varying eventful emotion lay dark and unconjectured. He filled up, with wonted regularity, the colourings of existence, and smiled and moved as other men. For still, in the heroism with which devotion conquers self, he sought only to cheer and gladden the young heart on which he had embarked his all; and he kept the dark tempest of his anguish for the solitude of night.

That was a peculiar doom which Fate had reserved for him; and casting him, in after years, on the great sea of public strife, it seemed as if she were resolved to tear from his heart all yearnings for the land. For him there was to be no green or sequestered spot in the valley of household peace. His bark was to know no haven, and his soul not even the desire of rest. For action is that Lethe in which alone we forget our former dreams, and the mind that, too stern not to wrestle with its emotions, seeks to conquer regret, must leave itself no leisure to look behind. Who knows what benefits to the world may have sprung from the sorrows of the benefactor? As the harvest that gladdens mankind in the suns of autumn was called forth by the rains of spring, so the griefs of youth may make the fame of maturity.

Gertrude, charmed by the beauties of the river, desired to continue the voyage to Mayence. The rich Trevylyan persuaded the physician who had attended her to accompany them, and they once more pursued their way along the banks of the feudal Rhine. For what the Tiber is to the classic, the Rhine is to the chivalric, age. The steep rock and the grey dismantled tower, the massive and rude picturesque of the feudal days, constitute the great features of the scene; and you might almost fancy, as you glide along, that you are sailing back adown the river of Time, and the monuments of the pomp and power of old rising, one after one, upon its shores!

Vane and Du——e, the physician, at the farther end of the vessel, conversed upon stones and strata, in that singu-

lar pedantry of science which strips nature to a skeleton, and prowls among the dead bones of the world, unconscious of its living beauty.

They left Gertrude and Trevylyan to themselves, and "bending o'er the vessel's laving side," they indulged in silence the melancholy with which each was imbued. For Gertrude began to waken, though doubtingly and at intervals, to a sense of the short span that was granted to her life; and over the loveliness around her there floated that sad and ineffable interest which springs from the presentiment of our own death. They passed the rich island of Oberwerth, and Hochheim, famous for its ruby grape, and saw, from his mountain bed, the Lahn bear his tribute of fruits and corn into the treasury of the Rhine. Proudly rose the tower of Niederlahnstein, and deeply lay its shadows along the stream. It was late noon; the cattle had sought the shade from the slanting sun, and, far beyond, the holy castle of Marksburg raised its battlements above mountains covered with the vine. On the water two boats had been drawn alongside each other; and from one, now moving to the land, the splash of oars broke the general stillness of the tide. Fast by an old tower the fishermen were busied in their craft, but the sound of their voices did not reach the ear. It was life, but a silent life; suited to the tranquillity of noon.

"There is something in travel," said Gertrude, "which constantly, even amidst the most retired spots, impresses us with the exuberance of life. We come to those quiet nooks and find a race whose existence we never dreamed of. In their humble path they know the same passions and tread the same career as ourselves. The mountains shut them out from the great world, but their village is a world in itself. And they know and heed no more of the turbulent scenes of remote cities, than our own planet of the inhabitants of the distant stars. What then is death, but the forgetfulness of some few hearts added to the general unconsciousness of our existence that pervades the universe? The

bubble breaks in the vast desert of the air without a sound."

"Why talk of death?" said Trevylyan, with a writhing smile; "these sunny scenes should not call forth such melancholy images."

"Melancholy," repeated Gertrude, mechanically. "Yes, death is indeed melancholy when we are loved!"

They stayed a short time at Niederlahnstein, for Vane was anxious to examine the minerals that the Lahn brings into the Rhine; and the sun was waning towards its close as they renewed their voyage. As they sailed slowly on, Gertrude said: "How like a dream is this sentiment of existence, when, without labour or motion, every change of scene is brought before us; and if I am with you, dearest, I do not feel it less resembling a dream, for I have dreamed of you lately more than ever. And dreams have become a part of my life itself."

"Speaking of dreams," said Trevylyan, as they pursued that mysterious subject; "I once during my former residence in Germany fell in with a singular enthusiast, who had taught himself what he termed 'A System of Dreaming.' When he first spoke to me upon it I asked him to explain what he meant, which he did somewhat in the following words."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LIFE OF DREAMS.

"I WAS born," said he, "with many of the sentiments of the poet, but without the language to express them; my feelings were constantly chilled by the intercourse of the actual world—my family, mere Germans, dull and unimpassioned—had nothing in common with me; nor did I out of my family find those with whom I could better sympathise. I was revolted by friendships—for they were susceptible to every change; I was disappointed in love—for the

truth never approached to my ideal. Nursed early in the lap of Romance, enamoured of the wild and the adventurous, the commonplaces of life were to me inexpressibly tame and joyless. And yet indolence, which belongs to the poetical character, was more inviting than that eager and uncontemplative action which can alone wring enterprise from life. Meditation was my natural element. I loved to spend the noon reclined by some shady stream, and in a half sleep to shape images from the glancing sunbeams; a dim and unreal order of philosophy, that belongs to our nation, was my favourite intellectual pursuit. And I sought amongst the Obscure and the Recondite the variety and emotion I could not find in the Familiar. Thus constantly watching the operations of the inner mind, it occurred to me at last that sleep having its own world, but as yet a rude and fragmentary one, it might be possible to shape from its chaos all those combinations of beauty, of power, of glory, and of love, which were denied to me in the world in which my frame walked and had its being. So soon as this idea came upon me, I nursed and cherished, and mused over it, till I found that the imagination began to effect the miracle I desired. By brooding ardently, intensely, before I retired to rest, over any especial train of thought, over any ideal recreations; by keeping the body utterly still and quiescent during the whole day; by shutting out all living adventure, the memory of which might perplex and interfere with the stream of events that I desired to pour forth into the wilds of sleep, I discovered at last that I could lead in dreams a life solely their own, and utterly distinct from the life of day. Towers and palaces, all my heritage and seigneury, rose before me from the depths of night; I quaffed from jewelled cups the Falernian of imperial vaults; music from harps of celestial tone filled up the crevices of air; and the smiles of immortal beauty flushed like sunlight over all. Thus the adventure and the glory that I could not for my waking life obtain, was obtained for me in sleep. I wandered with the gryphon and the gnome; I

sounded the horn at enchanted portals; I conquered in the knightly lists; I planted my standard over battlements huge as the painter's birth of Babylon itself.

"But I was afraid to call forth one shape on whose loveliness to pour all the hidden passion of my soul. I trembled lest my sleep should present me some image which it could never restore, and, waking from which, even the new world I had created might be left desolate for ever. I shuddered lest I should adore a vision which the first ray of morning could smite to the grave.

"In this train of mind I began to wonder whether it might not be possible to connect dreams together; to supply the thread that was wanting; to make one night continue the history of the other, so as to bring together the same shapes and the same scenes, and thus lead a connected and harmonious life, not only in the one half of existence, but in the other, the richer and more glorious, half. No sooner did this idea present itself to me, than I burned to accomplish it. I had before taught myself that Faith is the great creator; that to believe fervently is to make belief true. So I would not suffer my mind to doubt the practicability of its scheme. I shut myself up then entirely by day, refused books, and hated the very sun, and compelled all my thoughts (and sleep is the mirror of thought) to glide in one direction, the direction of my dreams, so that from night to night the imagination might keep up the thread of action, and I might thus lie down full of the past dream and confident of the sequel. Not for one day only, or for one month, did I pursue this system, but I continued it zealously and sternly till at length it began to succeed. Who shall tell," cried the enthusiast,—I see him now with his deep, bright, sunken eyes, and his wild hair thrown backward from his brow, "the rapture I experienced, when first, faintly and half distinct, I perceived the harmony I had invoked dawn upon my dreams? At first there was only a partial and desultory connection between them; my eye recognised certain shapes, my ear certain tones common to each; by de-

grees these augmented in number, and were more defined in outline. At length one fair face broke forth from among the ruder forms, and night after night appeared mixing with them for a moment and then vanishing, just as the mariner watches, in a clouded sky, the moon shining through the drifting rack, and quickly gone. My curiosity was now vividly excited; the face, with its lustrous eyes and seraph features, roused all the emotions that no living shape had called forth. I became enamoured of a dream, and as the statue to the Cyprian was my creation to me; so from this intent and unceasing passion, I at length worked out my reward. My dream became more palpable ; I spoke with it; I knelt to it; my lips were pressed to its own; we exchanged the vows of love, and morning only separated us with the certainty that at night we should meet again. Thus then," continued my visionary, "I commenced a history utterly separate from the history of the world, and it went on alternately with my harsh and chilling history of the day, equally regular and equally continuous. And what, you ask, was that history? Methought I was a prince in some Eastern island that had no features in common with the colder north of my native home. By day I looked upon the dull walls of a German town, and saw homely or squalid forms passing before me; the sky was dim and the sun cheerless. Night came on with her thousand stars, and brought me the dews of sleep. Then suddenly there was a new world; the richest fruits hung from the trees in clusters of gold and purple. Palaces of the quaint fashion of the sunnier climes, with spiral minarets and glittering cupolas, were mirrored upon vast lakes sheltered by the palm-tree and banana. The sun seemed a different orb, so mellow and gorgeous were his beams; birds and winged things of all hues fluttered in the shining air; the faces and garments of men were not of the northern regions of the world, and their voices spoke a tongue which, strange at first, by degrees I interpreted. Sometimes I made war upon neighbouring kings; sometimes I chased the spotted pard

through the vast gloom of immemorial forests; my life was at once a life of enterprise and pomp. But above all there was the history of my love! I thought there was a thousand difficulties in the way of attaining its possession. Many were the rocks I had to scale, and the battles to wage, and the fortresses to storm, in order to win her as my bride. But at last," (continued the enthusiast) "she *is* won, she is my own! Time in that wild world, which I visit nightly, passes not so slowly as in this, and yet an hour may be the same as a year. This continuity of existence, this successive series of dreams, so different from the broken incoherence of other men's sleep, at times bewilders me with strange and suspicious thoughts. What if this glorious sleep be a real life, and this dull waking the true repose? Why not? What is there more faithful in the one than in the other? And there have I garnered and collected all of pleasure that I am capable of feeling. I seek no joy in this world—I form no ties, I feast not, nor love, nor make merry—I am only impatient till the hour when I may re-enter my royal realms and pour my renewed delight into the bosom of my bright Ideal. There then have I found all that the world denied me; there have I realised the yearning and the aspiration within me; there have I coined the untold poetry into the Felt—the Seen!"

I found, continued Trevylyan, that this tale was corroborated by inquiry into the visionary's habits. He shunned society; avoided all unnecessary movement or excitement. He fared with rigid abstemiousness, and only appeared to feel pleasure as the day departed, and the hour of return to his imaginary kingdom approached. He always retired to rest punctually at a certain hour, and would sleep so soundly, that a cannon fired under his window would not arouse him. He never, which may seem singular, spoke or moved much in his sleep, but was peculiarly calm, almost to the appearance of lifelessness; but, discovering once that he had been watched in sleep, he was wont afterwards carefully to secure the chamber from intrusion. His

victory over the natural incoherence of sleep had, when I first knew him, lasted for some years; possibly what imagination first produced was afterwards continued by habit.

I saw him again a few months subsequent to this confession, and he seemed to me much changed. His health was broken, and his abstraction had deepened into gloom.

I questioned him of the cause of the alteration, and he answered me with great reluctance:

"She is dead," said he; "my realms are desolate! A serpent stung her, and she died in these very arms. Vainly, when I started from my sleep in horror and despair, vainly did I say to myself, This is but a dream. I shall see her again. A vision cannot die! Hath it flesh that decays? is it not a spirit—bodiless—indissoluble? With what terrible anxiety I awaited the night! Again I slept and the DREAM lay again before me—dead and withered. Even the ideal can vanish. I assisted in the burial; I laid her in the earth; I heaped the monumental mockery over her form. And never since hath she, or aught like her, revisited my dreams. I see her only when I wake; thus to wake is indeed to dream! But," continued the visionary in a solemn voice, "I feel myself departing from this world, and with a fearful joy; for I think there may be a land beyond even the land of sleep where I shall see her again,—a land in which a vision itself may be restored."

And in truth, concluded Trevylyan, the dreamer died shortly afterwards, suddenly, and in his sleep. And never before, perhaps, had Fate so literally made of a living man (with his passions and his powers, his ambition and his love) the plaything and puppet of a dream!

"Ah," said Vane, who had heard the latter part of Trevylyan's story; "could the German have bequeathed to us his secret, what a refuge should we possess from the ills of earth! The dungeon and disease, poverty, affliction, shame, would cease to be the tyrants of our lot; and to

Sleep we should confine our history and transfer our emotions."

"Gertrude," whispered the lover, "what his kingdom and his bride were to the Dreamer art thou to me!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BROTHERS.

The banks of the Rhine now shelved away into sweeping plains, and on their right rose the once imperial city of Boppart. In no journey of similar length do you meet with such striking instances of the mutability and shifts of power. To find, as in the Memphian Egypt, a city sunk into a heap of desolate ruins; the hum, the roar, the mart of nations, hushed into the silence of ancestral tombs, is less humbling to our human vanity than to mark, as along the Rhine, the kingly city dwindled into the humble town or the dreary village; decay without its grandeur, change without the awe of its solitude! On the site on which Drusus raised his Roman tower, and the kings of the Franks their palaces, trade now dribbles in tobacco-pipes, and transforms into an excellent cotton factory the antique nunnery of Köningsberg! So be it; it is the progressive order of things—the world itself will soon be one excellent cotton factory!

"Look!" said Trevylyan, as they sailed on, "at yonder mountain, with its two traditionary Castles of Liebenstein and Sternfels."

Massive and huge the ruins swelled above the green rock, at the foot of which lay, in happier security from time and change, the clustered cottages of the peasant, with a single spire rising above the quiet village.

"Is there not, Albert, a celebrated legend attached to those castles?" said Gertrude. "I think I remember to

have heard their names in connection with your profession of tale-teller."

"Yes," said Trevylyan, "the story relates to the last lords of those shattered towers, and——"

"You will sit here, nearer to me, and begin," interrupted Gertrude, in her tone of childlike command—"Come."

THE BROTHERS.

A TALE.[1]

You must imagine, then, dear Gertrude (said Trevylyan), a beautiful summer day, and by the same faculty that none possess so richly as yourself, for it is you who can kindle something of that divine spark even in me, you must rebuild those shattered towers in the pomp of old; raise the gallery and the hall; man the battlements with warders, and give the proud banners of ancestral chivalry to wave upon the walls. But above, sloping half down the rock, you must fancy the hanging gardens of Liebenstein, fragrant with flowers, and basking in the noonday sun.

On the greenest turf, underneath an oak, there sat three persons, in the bloom of youth. Two of the three were brothers; the third was an orphan girl, whom the lord of the opposite tower of Sternfels had bequeathed to the protection of his brother, the chief of Liebenstein. The castle itself and the demesne that belonged to it passed away from the female line, and became the heritage of Otho, the orphan's cousin, and the younger of the two brothers now seated on the turf.

"And oh," said the elder, whose name was Warbeck, "you have twined a chaplet for my brother; have you not, dearest Leoline, a simple flower for me?"

The beautiful orphan—(for beautiful she was, Gertrude, as the heroine of the tale you bid me tell ought to be,—should she not have to the dreams of my fancy your lustrous

[1] This tale is, in reality, founded on the beautiful tradition which belongs to Liebenstein and Sternfels.

hair, and your sweet smile, and your eyes of blue, that are never, never silent? Ah, pardon me, that in a former tale I denied the heroine the beauty of your face, and remember that, to atone for it, I endowed her with the beauty of your mind)—the beautiful orphan blushed to her temples, and culling from the flowers in her lap the freshest of the roses, began weaving them into a wreath for Warbeck.

"It would be better," said the gay Otho, "to make my sober brother a chaplet of the rue and cypress; the rose is much too bright a flower for so serious a knight."

Leoline held up her hand reprovingly.

"Let him laugh, dearest cousin," said Warbeck, gazing passionately on her changing cheek: "and thou, Leoline, believe that the silent stream runs the deepest."

At this moment, they heard the voice of the old chief, their father, calling aloud for Leoline; for ever, when he returned from the chase, he wanted her gentle presence; and the hall was solitary to him if the light sound of her step, and the music of her voice, were not heard in welcome.

Leoline hastened to her guardian, and the brothers were left alone.

Nothing could be more dissimilar than the features and the respective characters of Otho and Warbeck. Otho's countenance was flushed with the brown hues of health; his eyes were of the brightest hazel: his dark hair wreathed in short curls round his open and fearless brow; the jest ever echoed on his lips, and his step was bounding as the foot of the hunter of the Alps. Bold and light was his spirit; if at times he betrayed the haughty insolence of youth, he felt generously, and though not ever ready to confess sorrow for a fault, he was at least ready to brave peril for a friend.

But Warbeck's frame, though of equal strength, was more slender in its proportions than that of his brother; the fair long hair that characterised his northern race hung on either side of a countenance calm and pale, and deeply

impressed with thought, even to sadness. His features, more majestic and regular than Otho's, rarely varied in their expression. More resolute even than Otho, he was less impetuous; more impassioned, he was also less capricious.

The brothers remained silent after Leoline had left them. Otho carelessly braced on his sword, that he had laid aside on the grass; but Warbeck gathered up the flowers that had been touched by the soft hand of Leoline, and placed them in his bosom.

The action disturbed Otho; he bit his lip, and changed colour; at length he said, with a forced laugh:

"It must be confessed, brother, that you carry your affection for our fair cousin to a degree that even relationship seems scarcely to warrant."

"It is true," said Warbeck, calmly: "I love her with a love surpassing that of blood."

"How!" said Otho, fiercely: "do you dare to think of Leoline as a bride?"

"Dare!" repeated Warbeck, turning yet paler than his wonted hue.

"Yes, I have said the word! Know, Warbeck, that I, too, love Leoline; I, too, claim her as my bride; and never, while I can wield a sword—never, while I wear the spurs of knighthood, will I render my claim to a living rival. Even," he added (sinking his voice), "though that rival be my brother!"

Warbeck answered not; his very soul seemed stunned; he gazed long and wistfully on his brother, and then, turning his face away, ascended the rock without uttering a single word.

This silence startled Otho. Accustomed to vent every emotion of his own, he could not comprehend the forbearance of his brother; he knew his high and brave nature too well to imagine that it arose from fear. Might it not be contempt, or might he not, at this moment, intend to seek their father; and, the first to proclaim his love for the orphan, advance, also, the privilege of the elder born? As

these suspicions flashed across him, the haughty Otho strode to his brother's side, and laying his hand on his arm, said:

"Whither goest thou? and dost thou consent to surrender Leoline?"

"Does she love thee, Otho?" answered Warbeck, breaking silence at last; and his voice spoke so deep an anguish, that it arrested the passions of Otho even at their height.

"It is thou who art now silent," continued Warbeck; "speak, doth she love thee, and has her lip confessed it?"

"I have believed that she loved me," faltered Otho; "but she is of maiden bearing, and her lip, at least, has never told it."

"Enough," said Warbeck; "release your hold."

"Stay," said Otho, his suspicions returning; "stay—yet one word; dost thou seek my father? He ever honoured thee more than me: wilt thou own to him thy love, and insist on thy right of birth? By my soul and my hope of heaven, do it, and one of us two must fall!"

"Poor boy!" answered Warbeck, bitterly; "how little thou canst read the heart of one who loves truly! Thinkest thou I would wed her if she loved thee? Thinkest thou I could, even to be blessed myself, give her one moment's pain? Out on the thought—away!"

"Then wilt not thou seek our father?" said Otho, abashed.

"Our father!—has our father the keeping of Leoline's affection?" answered Warbeck; and shaking off his brother's grasp, he sought the way to the castle.

As he entered the hall, he heard the voice of Leoline; she was singing to the old chief one of the simple ballads of the time, that the warrior and the hunter loved to hear. He paused lest he should break the spell (a spell stronger than a sorcerer's to him), and gazing upon Leoline's beautiful form, his heart sank within him. His brother and himself had each that day, as they sat in the gardens, given her a flower; *his* flower was the fresher and the rarer; his he saw not, but she wore his brother's in her bosom!

The chief, lulled by the music and wearied with the toils

of the chase, sank into sleep as the song ended, and Warbeck, coming forward, motioned to Leoline to follow him. He passed into a retired and solitary walk, and when they were a little distance from the castle, Warbeck turned round, and taking Leoline's hand, gently said:

"Let us rest here for one moment, dearest cousin; I have much on my heart to say to thee."

"And what is there," answered Leoline, as they sat on a mossy bank, with the broad Rhine glancing below, "what is there that my kind Warbeck would ask of me? Ah! would it might be some favour, something in poor Leoline's power to grant; for ever from my birth you have been to me most tender, most kind. You, I have often heard them say, taught my first steps to walk; you formed my infant lips into language, and, in after years, when my wild cousin was far away in the forests at the chase, you would brave his gay jest and remain at home, lest Leoline should be weary in the solitude. Ah, would I could repay you!"

Warbeck turned away his cheek; his heart was very full, and it was some moments before he summoned courage to reply.

"My fair cousin," said he, "those were happy days; but they were the days of childhood. New cares and new thoughts have now come on us. But I am still thy friend, Leoline, and still thou wilt confide in me thy young sorrows and thy young hopes as thou ever didst. Wilt thou not, Leoline?"

"Canst thou ask me?" said Leoline; and Warbeck, gazing on her face, saw that though her eyes were full of tears, they yet looked steadily upon his; and he knew that she loved him only as a sister.

He sighed, and paused again ere he resumed. "Enough," said he; "now to my task. Once on a time, dear cousin, there lived among these mountains a certain chief who had two sons, and an orphan like thyself dwelt also in his halls. And the elder son—but no matter, let us not waste words on *him!*—the younger son, then, loved the orphan dearly—

more dearly than cousins love; and, fearful of refusal, he prayed the elder one to urge his suit to the orphan. Leoline, my tale is done. Canst thou not love Otho as he loves thee?"

And now lifting his eyes to Leoline, he saw that she trembled violently, and her cheek was covered with blushes.

"Say," continued he, mastering himself; "is not that flower (his present) a token that he is chiefly in thy thoughts?"

"Ah, Warbeck! do not deem me ungrateful that I wear not yours also: but——"

"Hush!" said Warbeck, hastily; "I am but as thy brother; is not Otho more? He is young, brave, and beautiful. God grant that he may deserve thee, if thou givest him so rich a gift as thy affections."

"I saw less of Otho in my childhood," said Leoline, evasively; "therefore, his kindness of late years seemed stranger to me than thine."

"And thou wilt not then reject him? Thou wilt be his bride?"

"And *thy* sister," answered Leoline.

"Bless thee, mine own dear cousin! one brother's kiss then, and farewell! Otho shall thank thee for himself."

He kissed her forehead calmly, and, turning away, plunged into the thicket; then, nor till then, he gave vent to such emotions as, had Leoline seen them, Otho's suit had been lost for ever; for passionately, deeply as in her fond and innocent heart she loved Otho, the *happiness* of Warbeck was not less dear to her.

When the young knight had recovered his self-possession he went in search of Otho. He found him alone in the wood, leaning with folded arms against a tree, and gazing moodily on the ground. Warbeck's noble heart was touched at his brother's dejection.

"Cheer thee, Otho," said he; "I bring thee no bad tidings; I have seen Leoline—I have conversed with her—nay, start not—she loves thee! she is thine!"

"Generous—generous Warbeck!" exclaimed Otho, and he threw himself on his brother's neck. "No, no," said he, "this must not be; thou hast the elder claim—I resign her to thee. Forgive me my waywardness, brother, forgive me!"

"Think of the past no more," said Warbeck; "the love of Leoline is an excuse for greater offences than thine. And now, be kind to her; her nature is soft and keen. I know her well; for *I* have studied her faintest wish. Thou art hasty and quick of ire; but remember that a word wounds where love is deep. For my sake, as for hers, think more of her happiness than thine own; now seek her —she waits to hear from thy lips the tale that sounded cold upon mine."

With that he left his brother, and, once more re-entering the castle, he went into the hall of his ancestors. His father still slept; he put his hand on his grey hair, and blessed him; then stealing up to his chamber, he braced on his helm and armour, and thrice kissing the hilt of his sword, said, with a flushed cheek:

"Henceforth be *thou* my bride!" Then passing from the castle, he sped by the most solitary paths down the rock, gained the Rhine, and hailing one of the numerous fishermen of the river, won the opposite shore; and alone, but not sad, for his high heart supported him, and Leoline at least was happy, he hastened to Frankfort.

The town was all gaiety and life, arms clanged at every corner, the sounds of martial music, the wave of banners, the glittering of plumed casques, the neighing of war-steeds, all united to stir the blood and inflame the sense. St. Bertrand had lifted the sacred cross along the shores of the Rhine, and the streets of Frankfort witnessed with what success!

On that same day Warbeck assumed the sacred badge, and was enlisted among the knights of the Emperor Conrad.

We must suppose some time to have elapsed, and Otho

and Leoline were not yet wedded; for, in the first fervour of his gratitude to his brother, Otho had proclaimed to his father and to Leoline the conquest Warbeck had obtained over himself; and Leoline, touched to the heart, would not consent that the wedding should take place immediately. "Let him, at least," said she, "not be insulted by a premature festivity; and give him time, amongst the lofty beauties he will gaze upon in a far country, to forget, Otho, that he once loved her who is the beloved of thee."

The old chief applauded this delicacy; and even Otho, in the first flush of his feelings towards his brother, did not venture to oppose it. They settled, then, that the marriage should take place at the end of a year.

Months rolled away, and an absent and moody gloom settled upon Otho's brow. In his excursions with his gay companions among the neighbouring towns he heard of nothing but the glory of the Crusaders, of the homage paid to the heroes of the Cross at the courts they visited, of the adventures of their life, and the exciting spirit that animated their war. In fact, neither minstrel nor priest suffered the theme to grow cold; and the fame of those who had gone forth to the holy strife gave at once emulation and discontent to the youths who remained behind.

"And my brother enjoys this ardent and glorious life," said the impatient Otho; "while I, whose arm is as strong, and whose heart is as bold, languish here listening to the dull tales of a hoary sire and the silly songs of an orphan girl." His heart smote him at the last sentence, but he had already begun to weary of the gentle love of Leoline. Perhaps when he had no longer to gain a triumph over a rival the excitement palled; or perhaps his proud spirit secretly chafed at being conquered by his brother in generosity, even when outshining him in the success of love.

But poor Leoline, once taught that she was to consider Otho her betrothed, surrendered her heart entirely to his control. His wild spirit, his dark beauty, his daring valour, won while they awed her; and in the fitfulness of his

nature were those perpetual springs of hope and fear that are the fountains of ever-agitated love. She saw with increasing grief the change that was growing over Otho's mind; nor did she divine the cause. "Surely I have not offended him?" thought she.

Among the companions of Otho was one who possessed a singular sway over him. He was a knight of that mysterious order of the Temple, which exercised at one time so great a command over the minds of men.

A severe and dangerous wound in a brawl with an English knight had confined the Templar at Frankfort, and prevented his joining the Crusade. During his slow recovery he had formed an intimacy with Otho, and, taking up his residence at the castle of Liebenstein, had been struck with the beauty of Leoline. Prevented by his oath from marriage, he allowed himself a double license in love, and doubted not, could he disengage the young knight from his betrothed, that she would add a new conquest to the many he had already achieved. Artfully therefore he painted to Otho the various attractions of the Holy Cause; and, above all, he failed not to describe, with glowing colours, the beauties who, in the gorgeous East, distinguished with a prodigal favour the warriors of the Cross. Dowries, unknown in the more sterile mountains of the Rhine, accompanied the hand of these beauteous maidens; and even a prince's daughter was not deemed, he said, too lofty a marriage for the heroes who might win kingdoms for themselves.

"To me," said the Templar, "such hopes are eternally denied. But you, were you not already betrothed, what fortunes might await you!"

By such discourses the ambition of Otho was perpetually aroused; they served to deepen his discontent at his present obscurity, and to convert to distaste the only solace it afforded in the innocence and affection of Leoline.

One night, a minstrel sought shelter from the storm in the halls of Liebenstein. His visit was welcomed by the

chief, and he repaid the hospitality he had received by the exercise of his art. He sang of the chase, and the gaunt hound started from the hearth. He sang of love, and Otho, forgetting his restless dreams, approached to Leoline, and laid himself at her feet. Louder then and louder rose the strain. The minstrel sang of war; he painted the feats of the Crusaders; he plunged into the thickest of the battle; the steed neighed; the trump sounded; and you might have heard the ringing of the steel. But when he came to signalise the names of the boldest knights, high among the loftiest sounded the name of Sir Warbeck of Liebenstein. Thrice had he saved the imperial banner; two chargers slain beneath him, he had covered their bodies with the fiercest of the foe. Gentle in the tent and terrible in the fray, the minstrel should forget his craft ere the Rhine should forget its hero. The chief started from his seat. Leoline clasped the minstrel's hand.

"Speak,—you have seen him—he lives—he is honoured?"

"I myself am but just from Palestine, brave chief and noble maiden. I saw the gallant knight of Liebenstein at the right hand of the imperial Conrad. And he, ladye, was the only knight whom admiration shone upon without envy, its shadow. Who then" (continued the minstrel, once more striking his harp), "who then would remain inglorious in the hall? Shall not the banners of his sires reproach him as they wave? and shall not every voice from Palestine strike shame into his soul?"

"Right," cried Otho, suddenly, and flinging himself at the feet of his father. "Thou hearest what my brother has done, and thine aged eyes weep tears of joy. Shall *I* only dishonour thine old age with a rusted sword? No! grant me, like my brother, to go forth with the heroes of the Cross!"

"Noble youth," cried the harper, "therein speaks the soul of Sir Warbeck; hear him, sir knight,—hear the noble youth."

"Heaven cries aloud in his voice," said the Templar, solemnly.

"My son, I cannot chide thine ardour," said the old chief, raising him with trembling hands; "but Leoline, thy betrothed?"

Pale as a statue, with ears that doubted their sense as they drank in the cruel words of her lover, stood the orphan. She did not speak, she scarcely breathed; she sank into her seat, and gazed upon the ground, till, at the speech of the chief, both maiden pride and maiden tenderness restored her consciousness, and she said:

"*I*, uncle!—Shall *I* bid Otho stay when his wishes bid him depart?"

"He will return to thee, noble ladye, covered with glory," said the harper: but Otho said no more. The touching voice of Leoline went to his soul; he resumed his seat in silence; and Leoline, going up to him, whispered gently, "Act as though I were not;" and left the hall to commune with her heart and to weep alone.

"I can wed her before I go," said Otho, suddenly, as he sat that night in the Templar's chamber.

"Why, that is true! and leave thy bride in the first week —a hard trial!"

"Better than incur the chance of never calling her mine. Dear, kind, beloved Leoline!"

"Assuredly, she deserves all from thee; and, indeed, it is no small sacrifice, at thy years and with thy mien, to renounce for ever all interest among the noble maidens thou wilt visit. Ah, from the galleries of Constantinople what eyes will look down on thee, and what ears, learning that thou art Otho the bridegroom, will turn away, caring for thee no more! A bridegroom without a bride! Nay, man, much as the Cross wants warriors, I am enough thy friend to tell thee, if thou weddest, to stay peaceably at home, and forget in the chase the labours of war, from which thou wouldst strip the ambition of love."

"I would I knew what were best," said Otho, irresolutely. "My brother—ha, shall he for ever excel me?—But Leoline, how will she grieve—she who left him for me!"

"Was that thy fault?" said the Templar, gaily. "It may many times chance to thee again to be preferred to another. Troth, it is a sin under which the conscience may walk lightly enough. But sleep on it, Otho; my eyes grow heavy."

The next day Otho sought Leoline, and proposed to her that their wedding should precede his parting; but so embarrassed was he, so divided between two wishes, that Leoline, offended, hurt, stung by his coldness, refused the proposal at once. She left him lest he should see her weep, and then—then she repented even of her just pride!

But Otho, striving to appease his conscience with the belief that hers now was the *sole* fault, busied himself in preparations for his departure. Anxious to outshine his brother, he departed not as Warbeck, alone and unattended, but levying all the horse, men, and money that his domain of Sternfels—which he had not yet tenanted—would afford, he repaired to Frankfort at the head of a glittering troop.

The Templar, affecting a relapse, tarried behind, and promised to join him at that Constantinople of which he had so loudly boasted. Meanwhile he devoted his whole powers of pleasing to console the unhappy orphan. The force of her simple love was, however, stronger than all his arts. In vain he insinuated doubts of Otho; she refused to hear them: in vain he poured with the softest accents into her ear the witchery of flattery and song: she turned heedlessly away; and only pained by the courtesies that had so little resemblance to Otho, she shut herself up in her chamber, and pined in solitude for her forsaker.

The Templar now resolved to attempt darker arts to obtain power over her, when, fortunately, he was summoned suddenly away by a mission from the Grand Master, of so high import that it could not be resisted by a passion stronger in his breast than love—the passion of ambition. He left the castle to its solitude; and Otho peopling it no more with his gay companions, no solitude *could* be more unfrequently disturbed.

Meanwhile, though, ever and anon, the fame of Warbeck reached their ears, it came unaccompanied with that of Otho,—of him they had no tidings: and thus the love of the tender orphan was kept alive by the perpetual restlessness of fear. At length the old chief died, and Leoline was left utterly alone.

One evening as she sat with her maidens in the hall, the ringing of a steed's hoofs was heard in the outer court; a horn sounded, the heavy gates were unbarred, and a knight of a stately mien and covered with the mantle of the Cross entered the hall; he stopped for one moment at the entrance, as if overpowered by his emotion; in the next he had clasped Leoline to his breast.

"Dost thou not recognise thy cousin Warbeck?" He doffed his casque, and she saw that majestic brow which, unlike Otho's, had never changed or been clouded in its aspect to her.

"The war is suspended for the present," said he. "I learned my father's death, and I have returned home to hang up my banner in the hall and spend my days in peace."

Time and the life of camps had worked their change upon Warbeck's face; the fair hair, deepened in its shade, was worn from the temples, and disclosed one scar that rather aided the beauty of a countenance that had always something high and martial in its character: but the calm it had once worn had settled down into sadness; he conversed more rarely than before, and though he smiled not less often, nor less kindly, the smile had more of thought, and the kindness had forgot its passion. He had apparently conquered a love that was so early crossed, but not that fidelity of remembrance which made Leoline dearer to him than all others, and forbade him to replace the images he had graven upon his soul.

The orphan's lips trembled with the name of Otho, but a certain recollection stifled even her anxiety. Warbeck hastened to forestall her questions.

"Otho was well," he said, "and sojourning at Constan-

tinople; he had lingered there so long that the crusade had terminated without his aid: doubtless now he would speedily return;—a month, a week, nay, a day might restore him to her side."

Leoline was inexpressibly consoled, yet something remained untold. Why, so eager for the strife of the sacred tomb, had he thus tarried at Constantinople? She wondered, she wearied conjecture, but she did not dare to search farther.

The generous Warbeck concealed from her that Otho led a life of the most reckless and indolent dissipation;—wasting his wealth in the pleasures of the Greek court, and only occupying his ambition with the wild schemes of founding a principality in those foreign climes, which the enterprises of the Norman adventurers had rendered so alluring to the knightly bandits of the age.

The cousins resumed their old friendship, and Warbeck believed that it was friendship alone. They walked again among the gardens in which their childhood had strayed; they sat again on the green turf whereon they had woven flowers; they looked down on the eternal mirror of the Rhine;—ah! could it have reflected the same unawakened freshness of their life's early spring!

The grave and contemplative mind of Warbeck had not been so contented with the honours of war, but that it had sought also those calmer sources of émotion which were yet found among the sages of the East. He had drunk at the fountain of the wisdom of those distant climes, and had acquired the habits of meditation which were indulged by those wiser tribes from which the Crusaders brought back to the North the knowledge that was destined to enlighten their posterity. Warbeck, therefore, had little in common with the ruder chiefs around: he did not summon them to his board, nor attend at their noisy wassails. Often late at night, in yon shattered tower, his lonely lamp shone still over the mighty stream, and his only relief to loneliness was in the presence and the song of his soft cousin.

Months rolled on, when suddenly a vague and fearful rumour reached the castle of Liebenstein. Otho was returning home to the neighbouring tower of Sternfels; but not alone. He brought back with him a Greek bride of surprising beauty, and dowered with almost regal wealth. Leoline was the first to discredit the rumour; Leoline was soon the only one who disbelieved.

Bright in the summer noon flashed the array of horsemen; far up the steep ascent wound the gorgeous cavalcade; the lonely towers of Liebenstein heard the echo of many a laugh and peal of merriment. Otho bore home his bride to the hall of Sternfels.

That night there was a great banquet in Otho's castle; the lights shone from every casement, and music swelled loud and ceaselessly within.

By the side of Otho, glittering with the prodigal jewels of the East, sat the Greek. Her dark locks, her flashing eye, the false colours of her complexion, dazzled the eyes of her guests. On her left hand sat the Templar.

"By the holy rood," quoth the Templar, gaily, though he crossed himself as he spoke, "we shall scare the owls tonight on those grim towers of Liebenstein. Thy grave brother, Sir Otho, will have much to do to comfort his cousin when she sees what a gallant life she would have led with thee."

"Poor damsel!" said the Greek, with affected pity, "doubtless she will now be reconciled to the rejected one. I hear he is a knight of a comely mien."

"Peace!" said Otho, sternly, and quaffing a large goblet of wine.

The Greek bit her lip, and glanced meaningly at the Templar, who returned the glance.

"Nought but a beauty such as thine can win my pardon," said Otho, turning to his bride, and gazing passionately in her face.

The Greek smiled.

Well sped the feast, the laugh deepened, the wine circled,

when Otho's eye rested on a guest at the bottom of the board, whose figure was mantled from head to foot, and whose face was covered by a dark veil.

"Beshrew me!" said he, aloud, "but this is scarce courteous at our revel: will the stranger vouchsafe to unmask?"

These words turned all eyes to the figure, and they who sat next it perceived that it trembled violently; at length it rose, and walking slowly, but with grace, to the fair Greek, it laid beside her a wreath of flowers.

"It is a simple gift, ladye," said the stranger, in a voice of such sweetness that the rudest guest was touched by it. "But it is all I can offer, and the bride of Otho should not be without a gift at my hands. May ye both be happy!"

With these words, the stranger turned and passed from the hall silent as a shadow.

"Bring back the stranger!" cried the Greek, recovering her surprise. Twenty guests sprang up to obey her mandate.

"No, no!" said Otho, waving his hand impatiently. "Touch her not, heed her not, at your peril."

The Greek bent over the flowers to conceal her anger, and from amongst them dropped the broken half of a ring. Otho recognised it at once; it was the broken half of that ring which he had broken with his betrothed. Alas, he required not such a sign to convince him that that figure, so full of ineffable grace, that touching voice, that simple action so tender in its sentiment, that gift, that blessing, came only from the forsaken and forgiving Leoline.

But Warbeck, alone in his solitary tower, paced to and fro with agitated steps. Deep, undying wrath at his brother's falsehood, mingled with one burning, one delicious hope. He confessed now that he had deceived himself when he thought his passion was no more; was there any longer a bar to his union with Leoline?

In that delicacy which was breathed into him by his love, he had forborne to seek, or to offer her the insult of conso-

lation. He felt that the shock should be borne alone, and yet he pined, he thirsted, to throw himself at her feet.

Nursing these contending thoughts, he was aroused by a knock at his door; he opened it—the passage was thronged by Leoline's maidens; pale, anxious, weeping. Leoline had left the castle, with but one female attendant; none knew whither;—they knew too soon. From the hall of Sternfels she had passed over in the dark and inclement night to the valley in which the convent of Bornhofen offered to the weary of spirit and the broken of heart a refuge at the shrine of God.

At daybreak the next morning, Warbeck was at the convent's gate. He saw Leoline: what a change one night of suffering had made in that face, which was the fountain of all loveliness to him! He clasped her in his arms; he wept; he urged all that love could urge: he besought her to accept that heart which had never wronged her memory by a thought. "Oh, Leoline! didst thou not say once that these arms nursed thy childhood; that this voice soothed thine early sorrows? Ah, trust to them again and for ever. From a love that forsook thee turn to the love that never swerved."

"No," said Leoline; "no. What would the chivalry of which thou art the boast—what would they say of thee, wert thou to wed one affianced and deserted, who tarried years for another, and brought to thine arms only that heart which he had abandoned? No; and even if thou, as I know thou wouldst be, wert callous to such wrong of thy high name, shall I bring to thee a broken heart and bruised spirit? shalt thou wed sorrow and not joy? and shall sighs that will not cease, and tears that may not be dried, be the only dowry of thy bride? Thou, too, for whom all blessings should be ordained? No, forget me; forget thy poor Leoline! She hath nothing but prayers for thee."

In vain Warbeck pleaded; in vain he urged all that passion and truth could urge; the springs of earthly love were for ever dried up in the orphan's heart, and her reso-

lution was immovable—she tore herself from his arms, and the gate of the convent creaked harshly on his ear.

A new and stern emotion now wholly possessed him; though naturally mild and gentle, he cherished anger, when once it was aroused, with the strength of a calm mind. Leoline's tears, her sufferings, her wrongs, her uncomplaining spirit, the change already stamped upon her face, all cried aloud to him for vengeance. "She is an orphan," said he, bitterly; "she hath none to protect, to redress her, save me alone. My father's charge over her forlorn youth descends of right to me. What matters it whether her forsaker be my brother? He is *her* foe. Hath he not crushed her heart? Hath he not consigned her to sorrow till the grave? And with what insult! no warning, no excuse; with lewd wassailers keeping revel for his new bridals in the hearing—before the sight—of his betrothed! Enough! the time hath come when, to use his own words, 'One of us two must fall!'" He half drew his sword as he spoke, and thrusting it back violently into the sheath, strode home to his solitary castle. The sound of steeds and of the hunting-horn met him at his portal; the bridal train of Sternfels, all mirth and gladness, were parting for the chase.

That evening a knight in complete armour entered the banquet-hall of Sternfels, and defied Otho, on the part of Warbeck of Liebenstein, to mortal combat.

Even the Templar was startled by so unnatural a challenge; but Otho, reddening, took up the gage, and the day and spot were fixed. Discontented, wroth with himself, a savage gladness seized him;—he longed to wreak his desperate feelings even on his brother. Nor had he ever in his jealous heart forgiven that brother his virtues and his renown.

At the appointed hour the brothers met as foes. Warbeck's vizor was up, and all the settled sternness of his soul was stamped upon his brow. But Otho, more willing to brave the arm than to face the front of his brother, kept his vizor down; the Templar stood by him with folded

arms. It was a study in human passions to his mocking mind. Scarce had the first trump sounded to this dread conflict, when a new actor entered on the scene. The rumour of so unprecedented an event had not failed to reach the convent of Bornhofen;—and now, two by two, came the sisters of the holy shrine, and the armed men made way, as with trailing garments and veiled faces they swept along into the very lists. At that moment one from amongst them left her sisters with a slow majestic pace, and paused not till she stood right between the brother foes.

"Warbeck," she said in a hollow voice, that curdled up his dark spirit as it spoke, "is it thus thou wouldst prove thy love, and maintain thy trust over the fatherless orphan whom thy sire bequeathed to thy care? Shall I have murder on my soul?" At that question she paused, and those who heard it were struck dumb and shuddered. "The murder of one man by the hand of his own brother! Away, Warbeck! *I command.*"

"Shall I forget thy wrongs, Leoline?" said Warbeck.

"Wrongs! they united me to God! they are forgiven, they are no more. Earth has deserted me, but Heaven hath taken me to its arms;—shall I murmur at the change? And thou, Otho"—here her voice faltered—"thou, does thy conscience smite thee not?—wouldst thou atone for robbing me of hope by barring against me the future? Wretch that I should be, could I dream of mercy—could I dream of comfort, if thy brother fell by thy sword in my cause? Otho, I have pardoned thee, and blessed thee and thine. Once, perhaps, thou didst love me; remember how I loved thee—cast down thine arms."

Otho gazed at the veiled form before him. Where had the soft Leoline learned to command? He turned to his brother; he felt all that he had inflicted upon both; and casting his sword upon the ground, he knelt at the feet of Leoline and kissed her garment with a devotion that votary never lavished on a holier saint.

The spell that lay over the warriors around was broken;

there was one loud cry of congratulation and joy. "And thou, Warbeck!" said Leoline, turning to the spot where, still motionless and haughty, Warbeck stood.

"Have I ever rebelled against thy will?" said he, softly; and buried the point of his sword in the earth. "Yet, Leoline, yet," added he, looking at his kneeling brother, "yet art thou already better avenged than by this steel!"

"Thou art! thou art!" cried Otho, smiting his breast; and slowly, and scarce noting the crowd that fell back from his path, Warbeck left the lists.

Leoline said no more; her divine errand was fulfilled. She looked long and wistfully after the stately form of the knight of Liebenstein, and then, with a slight sigh, she turned to Otho, "This is the last time we shall meet on earth. Peace be with us all!"

She then, with the same majestic and collected bearing, passed on towards the sisterhood; and as, in the same solemn procession, they glided back towards the convent, there was not a man present—no, not even the hardened Templar—who would not, like Otho, have bent his knee to Leoline.

Once more Otho plunged into the wild revelry of the age; his castle was thronged with guests, and night after night the lighted halls shone down athwart the tranquil Rhine. The beauty of the Greek, the wealth of Otho, the fame of the Templar, attracted all the chivalry from far and near. Never had the banks of the Rhine known so hospitable a lord as the knight of Sternfels. Yet gloom seized him in the midst of gladness, and the revel was welcome only as the escape from remorse. The voice of scandal, however, soon began to mingle with that of envy at the pomp of Otho. The fair Greek, it was said, weary of her lord, lavished her smiles on others: the young and the fair were always most acceptable at the castle; and, above all, her guilty love for the Templar scarcely affected disguise. Otho alone appeared unconscious of the rumour, and though

he had begun to neglect his bride, he relaxed not in his intimacy with the Templar.

It was noon, and the Greek was sitting in her bower alone with her suspected lover; the rich perfumes of the East mingled with the fragrance of flowers, and various luxuries, unknown till then in those northern shores, gave a soft and effeminate character to the room.

"I tell thee," said the Greek, petulantly, "that he begins to suspect; that I have seen him watch thee, and mutter as he watched, and play with the hilt of his dagger. Better let us fly ere it is too late, for his vengeance would be terrible were it once roused against us. Ah, why did I ever forsake my own sweet land for these barbarous shores! There, love is not considered eternal, nor inconstancy a crime worthy death."

"Peace, pretty one!" said the Templar, carelessly; "thou knowest not the laws of our foolish chivalry. Thinkest thou I could fly from a knight's halls like a thief in the night? Why, verily, even the red cross would not cover such dishonour. If thou fearest that thy dull lord suspects, let us part. The emperor hath sent to me from Frankfort. Ere evening I might be on my way thither."

"And I left to brave the barbarian's revenge alone? Is this thy chivalry?"

"Nay, prate not so wildly," answered the Templar. "Surely, when the object of his suspicion is gone, thy woman's art and thy Greek wiles can easily allay the jealous fiend. Do I not know thee, Glycera? Why, thou wouldst fool all men—save a Templar."

"And thou, cruel, wouldst thou leave me?" said the Greek, weeping. "How shall I live without thee?"

The Templar laughed slightly. "Can such eyes ever weep without a comforter? But farewell; I must not be found with thee. To-morrow I depart for Frankfort; we shall meet again."

As soon as the door closed on the Templar, the Greek rose, and pacing the room, said, "Selfish, selfish! how could I

ever trust him? Yet I dare not brave Otho alone. Surely it was his step that disturbed us in our yesterday's interview? Nay, I will fly. I can never want a companion."

She clapped her hands; a young page appeared; she threw herself on her seat and wept bitterly.

The page approached, and love was mingled with his compassion.

"Why weepest thou, dearest lady?" said he; "is there aught in which Conrad's services—services!—ah thou hast read his heart—*his devotion* may avail?"

Otho had wandered out the whole day alone; his vassals had observed that his brow was more gloomy than its wont, for he usually concealed whatever might prey within. Some of the most confidential of his servitors he had conferred with, and the conference had deepened the shadow of his countenance. He returned at twilight; the Greek did not honour the repast with her presence. She was unwell, and not to be disturbed. The gay Templar was the life of the board.

"Thou carriest a sad brow to-day, Sir Otho," said he; "good faith, thou hast caught it from the air of Liebenstein."

"I have something troubles me," answered Otho, forcing a smile, "which I would fain impart to thy friendly bosom. The night is clear and the moon is up, let us forth alone into the garden."

The Templar rose, and he forgot not to gird on his sword as he followed the knight.

Otho led the way to one of the most distant terraces that overhung the Rhine.

"Sir Templar," said he, pausing, "answer me one question on thy knightly honour. Was it thy step that left my lady's bower yester-eve at vesper?"

Startled by so sudden a query, the wily Templar faltered in his reply.

The red blood mounted to Otho's brow. "Nay, lie not,

sir knight; these eyes, thanks to God! have not witnessed, but these ears have heard from others of my dishonour."

As Otho spoke, the Templar's eye resting on the water, perceived a boat rowing fast over the Rhine; the distance forbade him to see more than the outline of two figures within it. "She was right," thought he; "perhaps that boat already bears her from the danger."

Drawing himself up to the full height of his tall stature, the Templar replied haughtily:

"Sir Otho of Sternfels, if thou hast deigned to question thy vassals, obtain from them only an answer. It is not to contradict such minions that the knights of the Temple pledge their word!"

"Enough," cried Otho, losing patience, and striking the Templar with his clenched hand. "Draw, traitor, draw!"

Alone in his lofty tower Warbeck watched the night deepen over the heavens, and communed mournfully with himself. "To what end," thought he, "have these strong affections, these capacities of love, this yearning after sympathy, been given me? Unloved and unknown I walk to my grave, and all the nobler mysteries of my heart are for ever to be untold."

Thus musing, he heard not the challenge of the warder on the wall, or the unbarring of the gate below, or the tread of footsteps along the winding stair; the door was thrown suddenly open, and Otho stood before him. "Come," he said, in a low voice trembling with passion; "come, I will show thee that which shall glad thine heart. Twofold is Leoline avenged."

Warbeck looked in amazement on a brother he had not met since they stood in arms each against the other's life, and he now saw that the arm that Otho extended to him dripped with blood, trickling drop by drop upon the floor.

"Come," said Otho, "follow me; it is my last prayer. Come, for Leoline's sake, come."

At that name Warbeck hesitated no longer; he girded on his sword, and followed his brother down the stairs and

through the castle gate. The porter scarcely believed his eyes when he saw the two brothers, so long divided, go forth at that hour alone, and seemingly in friendship.

Warbeck, arrived at that epoch in the feelings when nothing stuns, followed with silent steps the rapid strides of his brother. The two castles, as you are aware, are scarce a stone's throw from each other. In a few minutes Otho paused at an open space in one of the terraces of Sternfels, on which the moon shone bright and steady. "Behold!" he said, in a ghastly voice, "behold!" and Warbeck saw on the sward the corpse of the Templar, bathed with the blood that even still poured fast and warm from his heart.

"Hark!" said Otho. "He it was who first made me waver in my vows to Leoline; he persuaded me to wed yon whited falsehood. Hark! he, who had thus wronged my real love, dishonoured me with my faithless bride, and thus —thus—thus"—as, grinding his teeth, he spurned again and again the dead body of the Templar—"thus Leoline and myself are avenged!"

"And thy wife?" said Warbeck, pityingly.

"Fled—fled with a hireling page. It is well! she was not worth the sword that was once belted on—by Leoline."

The tradition, dear Gertrude, proceeds to tell us that Otho, though often menaced by the rude justice of the day for the death of the Templar, defied and escaped the menace. On the very night of his revenge a long and delirious illness seized him; the generous Warbeck forgave, forgot all, save that he had been once consecrated by Leoline's love. He tended him through his sickness, and when he recovered, Otho was an altered man. He forswore the comrades he had once courted, the revels he had once led. The halls of Sternfels were desolate as those of Liebenstein. The only companion Otho sought was Warbeck, and Warbeck bore with him. They had no topic in common, for on one subject Warbeck at least felt too deeply ever to trust himself to speak; yet did a strange and secret sympa-

thy re-unite them. They had at least a common sorrow; often they were seen wandering together by the solitary banks of the river, or amidst the woods, without apparently interchanging word or sign. Otho died first, and still in the prime of youth; and Warbeck was now left companionless. In vain the imperial court wooed him to its pleasures; in vain the camp proffered him the oblivion of renown. Ah! could he tear himself from a spot where morning and night he could see afar, amidst the valley, the roof that sheltered Leoline, and on which every copse, every turf, reminded him of former days? His solitary life, his midnight vigils, strange scrolls about his chamber, obtained him by degrees the repute of cultivating the darker arts; and shunning, he became shunned by all. But still it was sweet to hear from time to time of the increasing sanctity of her in whom he had treasured up his last thoughts of earth. She it was who healed the sick; she it was who relieved the poor, and the superstition of that age brought pilgrims from afar to the altars that she served.

Many years afterwards, a band of lawless robbers, who ever and anon broke from their mountain fastnesses to pillage and to desolate the valleys of the Rhine,—who spared neither sex nor age; neither tower nor hut; nor even the houses of God Himself,—laid waste the territories round Bornhofen, and demanded treasure from the convent. The abbess, of the bold lineage of Rudesheim, refused the sacrilegious demand; the convent was stormed; its vassals resisted; the robbers, inured to slaughter, won the day; already the gates were forced, when a knight, at the head of a small but hardy troop, rushed down from the mountain side and turned the tide of the fray. Wherever his sword flashed fell a foe. Wherever his war-cry sounded was a space of dead men in the thick of the battle. The fight was won; the convent saved; the abbess and the sisterhood came forth to bless their deliverer. Laid under an aged oak, he was bleeding fast to death; his head was bare and his locks were grey, but scarcely yet with years. One

only of the sisterhood recognised that majestic face; one bathed his parched lips; one held his dying hand; and in Leoline's presence passed away the faithful spirit of the last lord of Liebenstein!

"Oh!" said Gertrude, through her tears; "surely you must have altered the facts,—surely—surely—it must have been impossible for Leoline, with a woman's heart, to have loved Otho more than Warbeck?"

"My child," said Vane, "so think women when they *read* a tale of love, and see *the whole heart* bared before them; but not so act they in real life—when they see only the surface of character, and pierce not its depths—until it is too late!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.—A COMMON INCIDENT NOT BEFORE DESCRIBED.—TREVYLYAN AND GERTRUDE.

THE day now grew cool as it waned to its decline, and the breeze came sharp upon the delicate frame of the sufferer. They resolved to proceed no further; and as they carried with them attendants and baggage, which rendered their route almost independent of the ordinary accommodation, they steered for the opposite shore, and landed at a village beautifully sequestered in a valley, and where they fortunately obtained a lodging not often met with in the regions of the picturesque.

When Gertrude, at an early hour, retired to bed, Vane and Du——e fell into speculative conversation upon the nature of man. Vane's philosophy was of a quiet and passive scepticism; the physician dared more boldly, and rushed from doubt to negation. The attention of Trevylyan, as he sat apart and musing, was arrested in despite of himself. He listened to an argument in which he took no share; but which suddenly inspired him with an interest in that awful subject which, in the heat of youth and the oc-

cupations of the world, had never been so prominently called forth before.

"What!" thought he, with unutterable anguish, as he listened to the earnest vehemence of the Frenchman and the tranquil assent of Vane; "if this creed were indeed true,—if there be no other world—Gertrude is lost to me eternally,—through the dread gloom of death there would break forth no star!"

That is a peculiar incident that perhaps occurs to us all at times, but which I have never found expressed in books;—viz., to hear a doubt of futurity at the very moment in which the present is most overcast; and to find at once this world stripped of its delusion and the next of its consolation. It is perhaps for others, rather than ourselves, that the fond heart requires a Hereafter. The tranquil rest, the shadow, and the silence, the mere pause of the wheel of life, have no terror for the wise, who know the due value of the world—

> "After the billows of a stormy sea,
> Sweet is at last the haven of repose!"

But not so when that stillness is to divide us eternally from others; when those we have loved with all the passion, the devotion, the watchful sanctity of the weak human heart, are to exist to us no more!—when, after long years of desertion and widowhood on earth, there is to be no hope of reunion in that INVISIBLE beyond the stars; when the torch, not of life only, but of love, is to be quenched in the Dark Fountain; and the grave, that we would fain hope is the great restorer of broken ties, is but the dumb seal of hopeless—utter—inexorable separation! And it is this thought—this sentiment, which makes religion out of woe, and teaches belief to the mourning heart that in the gladness of united affections felt not the necessity of a heaven! To how many is the death of the beloved the parent of faith!

Stung by his thoughts, Trevylyan rose abruptly, and stealing from the lowly hostelry, walked forth amidst the

serene and deepening night; from the window of Gertrude's room the light streamed calm on the purple air.

With uneven steps and many a pause, he paced to and fro beneath the window, and gave the rein to his thoughts. How intensely he felt the ALL that Gertrude was to him! how bitterly he foresaw the change in his lot and character that her death would work out! For who that met him in later years ever dreamed that emotions so soft, and yet so ardent, had visited one so stern? Who could have believed that time was when the polished and cold Trevylyan had kept the vigils he now held below the chamber of one so little like himself as Gertrude, in that remote and solitary hamlet; shut in by the haunted mountains of the Rhine, and beneath the moonlight of the romantic North?

While thus engaged, the light in Gertrude's room was suddenly extinguished; it is impossible to express how much that trivial incident affected him! It was like an emblem of what was to come; the light had been the only evidence of life that broke upon that hour, and he was now left alone with the shades of night. Was not this like the herald of Gertrude's own death; the extinction of the only living ray that broke upon the darkness of the world?

His anguish, his presentiment of utter desolation, increased. He groaned aloud; he dashed his clenched hand to his breast—large and cold drops of agony stole down his brow. "Father," he exclaimed with a struggling voice, "let this cup pass from me! Smite my ambition to the root; curse me with poverty, shame, and bodily disease; but leave me this one solace, this one companion of my fate!"

At this moment Gertrude's window opened gently, and he heard accents steal soothingly upon his ear.

"Is not that your voice, Albert?" said she, softly. "I heard it just as I lay down to rest, and could not sleep while you were thus exposed to the damp night air. You do not answer; surely it is your voice: when did I mistake it for another's?"

Mastering with a violent effort his emotions, Trevylyan answered, with a sort of convulsive gaiety:

"Why come to these shores, dear Gertrude, unless you are honoured with the chivalry that belongs to them? What wind, what blight, can harm me while within the circle of your presence; and what sleep can bring me dreams so dear as the waking thought of you?"

"It is cold," said Gertrude, shivering; "come in, dear Albert, I beseech you, and I will thank you to-morrow." Gertrude's voice was choked by the hectic cough, that went like an arrow to Trevylyan's heart; and he felt that in her anxiety for him she was now exposing her own frame to the unwholesome night.

He spoke no more, but hurried within the house; and when the grey light of morn broke upon his gloomy features, haggard from the want of sleep, it might have seemed, in that dim eye and fast-sinking cheek, as if the lovers were not to be divided—even by death itself.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL LEARN HOW THE FAIRIES WERE RECEIVED BY THE SOVEREIGNS OF THE MINES.—THE COMPLAINT OF THE LAST OF THE FAUNS.—THE RED HUNTSMAN.—THE STORM.—DEATH.

In the deep valley of Ehrenthal, the metal kings—the Prince of the Silver Palaces, the Gnome Monarch of the dull Lead Mine, the President of the Copper United States, held a court to receive the fairy wanderers from the island of Nonnewërth.

The Prince was there, in a gallant hunting suit of oak leaves, in honour to England; and wore a profusion of fairy orders, which had been instituted from time to time, in honour of the human poets that had celebrated the spiritual and ethereal tribes. Chief of these, sweet Dreamer of the

Midsummer Night's Dream, was the badge crystallised from the dews that rose above the whispering reeds of Avon on the night of thy birth—the great epoch of the intellectual world! Nor wert thou, O beloved Musæus! nor thou, dim-dreaming Tieck! nor were ye, the wild imaginer of the bright-haired Undine, and the wayward spirit that invoked for the gloomy Manfred the Witch of the breathless Alps, and the spirits of earth and air!—nor were ye without the honours of fairy homage! Your memory may fade from the heart of man, and the spells of new enchanters may succeed to the charm you once wove over the face of the common world; but still in the green knolls of the haunted valley and the deep shade of forests, and the starred palaces of air, ye are honoured by the beings of your dreams, as demigods and kings! Your graves are tended by invisible hands, and the places of your birth are hallowed by no perishable worship!

Even as I write;[1] far away amidst the hills of Scotland, and by the forest thou hast clothed with immortal verdure; thou, the maker of "the Harp by long Glenfillan's spring," art passing from the earth which thou hast "painted with delight." And, such are the chances of mortal fame, our children's children may raise new idols on the site of thy holy altar, and cavil where their sires adored; but for thee the mermaid of the ocean shall wail in her coral caves, and the sprite that lives in the waterfalls shall mourn! Strange shapes shall hew thy monument in the recesses of the lonely rocks! ever by moonlight shall the fairies pause from their roundel when some wild note of their minstrelsy reminds them of thine own;—ceasing from their revelries, to weep for the silence of that mighty lyre, which breathed alike a revelation of the mysteries of spirits and of men!

The King of the Silver Mines sat in a cavern in the valley, through which the moonlight pierced its way and slept in shadow on the soil shining with metals wrought into un-

[1] It was just at the time the author was finishing this work that the great master of his art was drawing to the close of his career.

numbered shapes, and below him, on a humbler throne, with a grey beard and downcast eye, sat the aged King of the Dwarfs that preside over the dull realms of lead, and inspire the verse of ——, and the prose of ——! And there, too, a fantastic household elf was the President of the Copper Republic—a spirit that loves economy and the Uses, and smiles sparely on the Beautiful. But, in the centre of the cave, upon beds of the softest mosses, the untrodden growth of ages, reclined the fairy visitors—Nymphalin seated by her betrothed! And round the walls of the cave were dwarf attendants on the sovereigns of the metals, of a thousand odd shapes and fantastic garments. On the abrupt ledges of the rocks the bats, charmed to stillness but not sleep, clustered thickly, watching the scene with fixed and amazed eyes; and one old grey owl, the favourite of the witch of the valley, sat blinking in a corner, listening with all her might that she might bring home the scandal to her mistress.

"And tell me, Prince of the Rhine-Island Fays," said the King of the Silver Mines, "for thou art a traveller, and a fairy that hath seen much, how go men's affairs in the upper world? As to ourself, we live here in a stupid splendour, and only hear the news of the day when our brother of lead pays a visit to the English printing-press, or the President of Copper goes to look at his improvements in steam-engines."

"Indeed," replied Fayzenheim, preparing to speak like Æneas in the Carthaginian court; "indeed, your majesty, I know not much that will interest you in the present aspect of mortal affairs, except that you are quite as much honoured at this day as when the Roman conqueror bent his knee to you among the mountains of Taunus: and a vast number of little round subjects of yours are constantly carried about by the rich, and pined after with hopeless adoration by the poor. But, begging your majesty's pardon, may I ask what has become of your cousin, the King of the Golden Mines? I know very well that he has no dominion

in these valleys, and do not therefore wonder at his absence from your court this night; but I see so little of his subjects on earth that I should fear his empire was well nigh at an end, if I did not recognise everywhere the most servile homage paid to a power now become almost invisible."

The King of the Silver Mines fetched a deep sigh. "Alas, prince," said he, "too well do you divine the expiration of my cousin's empire. So many of his subjects have from time to time gone forth to the world, pressed into military service and never returning, that his kingdom is nearly depopulated. And he lives far off in the distant parts of the earth, in a state of melancholy seclusion; the age of gold has passed, the age of paper has commenced."

"Paper," said Nymphalin, who was still somewhat of a *précieuse;* "paper is a wonderful thing. What pretty books the human people write upon it!"

"Ah! that's what I design to convey," said the silver king. "It is the age less of paper money than paper government: the press is the true bank." The lord treasurer of the English fairies pricked up his ears at the word "bank." For he was the Attwood of the fairies: he had a favourite plan of making money out of bulrushes, and had written four large bees'-wings full upon the true nature of capital.

While they were thus conversing, a sudden sound as of some rustic and rude music broke along the air, and closing its wild burden, they heard the following song:

THE COMPLAINT OF THE LAST FAUN.

I.

"The moon on the Latmos mountain
  Her pining vigil keeps;
And ever the silver fountain
  In the Dorian valley weeps.
But gone are Endymion's dreams;—
  And the crystal lymph
  Bewails the nymph
Whose beauty sleeked the streams!

II.

"Round Arcady's oak its green
  The Bromian ivy weaves;
But no more is the satyr seen
  Laughing out from the glossy leaves.
Hushed is the Lycian lute,
  Still grows the seed
  Of the Mœnale reed,
But the pipe of Pan is mute!

III.

"The leaves in the noon-day quiver;—
  The vines on the mountains wave;—
And Tiber rolls his river
  As fresh by the Sylvan's cave;
But my brothers are dead and gone;
  And far away
  From their graves I stray,
And dream of the past alone!

IV.

"And the sun of the north is chill;—
  And keen is the northern gale;—
Alas for the song of the Argive hill;
  And the dance in the Cretan vale!—
The youth of the earth is o'er,
  And its breast is rife
  With the teeming life
Of the golden Tribes no more!

V.

"My race are more blest than I,
  Asleep in their distant bed;
'Twere better, be sure, to die
  Than to mourn for the buried Dead;—
To rove by the stranger streams,
  At dusk and dawn
  A lonely faun,
The last of the Grecian's dreams."

As the song ended a shadow crossed the moonlight, that lay white and lustrous before the aperture of the cavern; and Nymphalin, looking up, beheld a graceful, yet gro-

tesque figure standing on the sward without, and gazing on the group in the cave. It was a shaggy form, with a goat's legs and ears; but the rest of its body, and the height of the stature, like a man's. An arch, pleasant, yet malicious smile, played about its lips; and in its hand it held the pastoral pipe of which poets have sung;—they would find it difficult to sing to it!

"And who art thou?" said Fayzenheim, with the air of a hero.

"I am the last lingering wanderer of the race which the Romans worshipped: hither I followed their victorious steps, and in these green hollows have I remained. Sometimes in the still noon, when the leaves of spring bud upon the whispering woods, I peer forth from my rocky lair, and startle the peasant with my strange voice and stranger shape. Then goes he home, and puzzles his thick brain with mopes and fancies, till at length he imagines me, the creature of the south! one of his northern demons, and his poets adapt the apparition to their barbarous lines."

"Ho!" quoth the silver king, "surely thou art the origin of the fabled Satan of the cowled men living whilome in yonder ruins, with its horns and goatish limbs: and the harmless faun has been made the figuration of the most implacable of fiends. But why, O wanderer of the south! lingerest thou in these foreign dells? Why returnest thou not to the bi-forked hill-top of old Parnassus, or the wastes around the yellow course of the Tiber?"

"My brethren are no more," said the poor faun; "and the very faith that left us sacred and unharmed is departed. But here all the spirits not of mortality are still honoured; and I wander, mourning for Silenus; though amidst the vines that should console me for his loss."

"Thou hast known great beings in thy day," said the leaden king, who loved the philosophy of a truism (and the history of whose inspirations I shall one day write).

"Ah, yes," said the faun, "my birth was amidst the freshness of the world, when the flush of the universal life col-

oured all things with divinity; when not a tree but had its Dryad—not a fountain that was without its Nymph. I sat by the grey throne of Saturn, in his old age, ere yet he was discrowned (for he was no visionary ideal, but the arch monarch of the pastoral age): and heard from his lips the history of the world's birth. But those times are gone for ever—they have left harsh successors."

"It is the age of paper," muttered the lord treasurer, shaking his head.

"What ho, for a dance!" cried Fayzenheim, too royal for moralities, and he whirled the beautiful Nymphalin into a waltz. Then forth issued the fairies, and out went the dwarfs. And the faun leaning against an aged elm, ere yet the midnight waned, the elves danced their charmed round to the antique minstrelsy of his pipe—the minstrelsy of the Grecian world!

"Hast thou seen yet, my Nymphalin," said Fayzenheim, in the pauses of the dance, "the recess of the Hartz, and the red form of its mighty hunter?"

"It is a fearful sight," answered Nymphalin; "but with thee I should not fear."

"Away then," cried Fayzenheim; "let us away at the first cock-crow, into those shaggy dells, for there is no need of night to conceal us, and the unwitnessed blush of morn, or the dreary silence of noon, is, no less than the moon's reign, the season for the sports of the superhuman tribes."

Nymphalin, charmed with the proposal, readily assented, and at the last hour of night, bestriding the starbeams of the many-titled Friga, away sped the fairy cavalcade to the gloom of the mystic Hartz.

Fain would I relate the manner of their arrival in the thick recesses of the forest; how they found the Red Hunter seated on a fallen pine beside a wide chasm in the earth, with the arching boughs of the wizard oak wreathing above his head as a canopy, and his bow and spear lying idle at his feet. Fain would I tell of the reception which he deigned to the fairies, and how he told them of his an-

cient victories over man; how he chafed at the gathering invasions of his realm; and how joyously he gloated of some great convulsion[1] in the northern states, which, rapt into moody reveries in those solitary woods, the fierce demon broodingly foresaw. All these fain would I narrate, but they are not of the Rhine, and my story will not brook the delay. While thus conversing with the fiend, noon had crept on, and the sky had become overcast and lowering; the giant trees waved gustily to and fro, and the low gatherings of the thunder announced the approaching storm. Then the hunter rose and stretched his mighty limbs, and seizing his spear, he strode rapidly into the forest to meet the things of his own tribe that the tempest wakes from their rugged lair.

A sudden recollection broke upon Nymphalin. "Alas, alas!" she cried, wringing her hands; "what have I done! In journeying hither with thee, I have forgotten my office. I have neglected my watch over the elements, and my human charge is at this hour, perhaps, exposed to all the fury of the storm."

"Cheer thee, my Nymphalin," said the prince, "we will lay the tempest;" and he waved his sword and muttered the charms which curb the winds and roll back the marching thunder: but for once the tempest ceased not at his spells; and now, as the fairies sped along the troubled air, a pale and beautiful form met them by the way, and the fairies paused and trembled. For the power of that Shape could vanquish even them. It was the form of a Female, with golden hair, crowned with a chaplet of withered leaves; her bosoms, of an exceeding beauty, lay bare to the wind, and an infant was clasped between them, hushed into a sleep so still, that neither the roar of the thunder, nor the livid lightning flashing from cloud to cloud, could even ruffle, much less arouse, the slumberer. And the face of the female was unutterably calm and sweet (though with a something of severe); there was no line nor wrinkle in the

[1] Which has come to pass—1847.

hueless brow; care never wrote its defacing characters upon that everlasting beauty. It knew no sorrow or change; ghost-like and shadowy floated on that Shape through the abyss of Time, governing the world with an unquestioned and noiseless sway. And the children of the green solitudes of the earth, the lovely fairies of my tale, shuddered as they gazed and recognised—the form of DEATH!

DEATH VINDICATED.

"And why," said the beautiful Shape, with a voice soft as the last sighs of a dying babe; "why trouble ye the air with spells? mine is the hour and the empire, and the storm is the creature of my power. Far yonder to the west it sweeps over the sea, and the ship ceases to vex the waves; it smites the forest, and the destined tree, torn from its roots, feels the winter strip the gladness from its boughs no more! The roar of the elements is the herald of eternal stillness to their victims; and they who hear the progress of my power idly shudder at the coming of peace. And thou, O tender daughter of the fairy kings! why grievest thou at a mortal's doom? Knowest thou not that sorrow cometh with years, and that to live is to mourn? Blessed is the flower that, nipped in its early spring, feels not the blast that one by one scatters its blossoms around it, and leaves but the barren stem. Blessed are the young whom I clasp to my breast, and lull into the sleep which the storm cannot break, nor the morrow arouse to sorrow or to toil. The heart that is stilled in the bloom of its first emotions,—that turns with its last throb to the eye of love, as yet unlearned in the possibility of change,—has exhausted already the wine of life, and is saved only from the lees. As the mother soothes to sleep the wail of her troubled child, I open my arms to the vexed spirit, and my bosom cradles the unquiet to repose!"

The fairies answered not, for a chill and a fear lay over

them, and the Shape glided on; ever as it passed away through the veiling clouds they heard its low voice singing amidst the roar of the storm, as the dirge of the water-sprite over the vessel it hath lured into the whirlpool or the shoals.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THURMBERG.—A STORM UPON THE RHINE.—THE RUINS OF RHEINFELS.—PERIL UNFELT BY LOVE.—THE ECHO OF THE LURLEIBERG.—ST. GOAR.—KAUB, GUTENFELS, AND PFALZGRAFENSTEIN.—A CERTAIN VASTNESS OF MIND IN THE FIRST HERMITS.—THE SCENERY OF THE RHINE TO BACHARACH.

Our party continued their voyage the next day, which was less bright than any they had yet experienced. The clouds swept on dull and heavy, suffering the sun only to break forth at scattered intervals; they wound round the curving bay which the Rhine forms in that part of its course; and gazed upon the ruins of Thurmberg, with the rich gardens that skirt the banks below. The last time Trevylyan had seen those ruins soaring against the sky, the green foliage at the foot of the rocks, and the quiet village sequestered beneath, glassing its roofs and solitary tower upon the wave, it had been with a gay summer troop of light friends, who had paused on the opposite shore during the heats of noon, and, over wine and fruits, had mimicked the groups of Boccaccio, and intermingled the lute, the jest, the momentary love, and the laughing tale.

What a difference now in his thoughts—in the object of the voyage—in his present companions! The feet of years fall noiseless; we heed, we note them not, till tracking the same course we passed long since, we are startled to find how deep the impression they leave behind. To revisit the scenes of our youth is to commune with the ghost of ourselves.

At this time the clouds gathered rapidly along the heavens, and they were startled by the first peal of the thunder. Sudden and swift came on the storm, and Trevylyan trembled as he covered Gertrude's form with the rude boat-cloaks they had brought with them; the small vessel began to rock wildly to and fro upon the waters. High above them rose the vast dismantled ruins of Rheinfels, the lightning darting through its shattered casements and broken arches, and brightening the gloomy trees that here and there clothed the rocks, and tossed to the angry wind. Swift wheeled the water-birds over the river, dipping their plumage in the white foam, and uttering their discordant screams. A storm upon the Rhine has a grandeur it is in vain to paint. Its rocks, its foliage, the feudal ruins that everywhere rise from the lofty heights—speaking in characters of stern decay of many a former battle against time and tempest; the broad and rapid course of the legendary river, all harmonise with the elementary strife; and you feel that to see the Rhine only in the sunshine is to be unconscious of its most majestic aspects. What baronial war had those ruins witnessed! From the rapine of the lordly tyrant of those battlements rose the first Confederation of the Rhine—the great strife between the new time and the old—the town and the castle—the citizen and the chief. Grey and stern those ruins breasted the storm—a type of the antique opinion which once manned them with armed serfs; and, yet in ruins and decay, appeals from the victorious freedom it may no longer resist!

Clasped in Trevylyan's guardian arms, and her head pillowed on his breast, Gertrude felt nothing of the storm save its grandeur; and Trevylyan's voice whispered cheer and courage to her ear. She answered by a smile, and a sigh, but not of pain. In the convulsions of nature we forget our own separate existence, our schemes, our projects, our fears; our dreams vanish back into their cells. One passion only the storm quells not, and the presence of Love mingles with the voice of the fiercest storms, as with the whis-

pers of the southern wind. So she felt, as they were thus drawn close together, and as she strove to smile away the anxious terror from Trevylyan's gaze—a security, a delight: for peril is sweet even to the fears of woman, when it impresses upon her yet more vividly that she is beloved.

"A moment more and we reach the land," murmured Trevylyan.

"I wish it not," answered Gertrude, softly. But ere they got into St. Goar the rain descended in torrents, and even the thick coverings round Gertrude's form were not sufficient protection against it. Wet and dripping she reached the inn; but not then, nor for some days, was she sensible of the shock her decaying health had received.

The storm lasted but a few hours, and the sun afterwards broke forth so brightly, and the stream looked so inviting, that they yielded to Gertrude's earnest wish, and, taking a larger vessel, continued their course; they passed along the narrow and dangerous defile of the Gewirre, and the fearful whirlpool of the "Bank;" and on the shore to the left the enormous rock of Lurlei rose, huge and shapeless, on their gaze. In this place is a singular echo, and one of the boatmen wound a horn, which produced an almost supernatural music—so wild, loud, and oft reverberated was its sound.

The river now curved along in a narrow and deep channel amongst rugged steeps, on which the westering sun cast long and uncouth shadows: and here the hermit, from whose sacred name the town of St. Goar derived its own, fixed his abode and preached the religion of the Cross. "There was a certain vastness of mind," said Vane, "in the adoption of utter solitude, in which the first enthusiasts of our religion indulged. The remote desert, the solitary rock, the rude dwelling hollowed from the cave, the eternal commune with their own hearts, with nature, and their dreams of God, all make a picture of severe and preter-human grandeur. Say what we will of the necessity and

charm of social life, there is a greatness about man when he dispenses with mankind."

"As to that," said Du——e, shrugging his shoulders, "there was probably very good wine in the neighbourhood, and the females' eyes about Oberwesel are singularly blue."

They now approached Oberwesel, another of the once imperial towns, and behind it beheld the remains of the castle of the illustrious family of Schomberg: the ancestors of the old hero of the Boyne. A little further on, from the opposite shore, the castle of Gutenfels rose above the busy town of Kaub.

"Another of those scenes," said Trevylyan, "celebrated equally by love and glory, for the castle's name is derived from that of the beautiful ladye of an emperor's passion; and below, upon a ridge in the steep, the great Gustavus issued forth his command to begin battle with the Spaniards."

"It looks peaceful enough now," said Vane, pointing to the craft that lay along the stream, and the green trees drooping over a curve in the bank. Beyond, in the middle of the stream itself, stands the lonely castle of Pfalzgrafenstein, sadly memorable as a prison to the more distinguished of criminals. How many pining eyes may have turned from those casements to the vine-clad hills of the free shore; how many indignant hearts have nursed the deep curses of hate in the dungeons, below, and longed for the wave that dashed against the grey walls to force its way within and set them free!

Here the Rhine seems utterly bounded, shrunk into one of those delusive lakes into which it so frequently seems to change its course; and as you proceed, it is as if the waters were silently overflowing their channel and forcing their way into the clefts of the mountain shore. Passing the Werth Island on one side and the castle of Stahleck on the other, our voyagers arrived at Bacharach, which, associating the feudal recollections with the classic, takes its name

from the god of the vine; and as Du——e declared with peculiar emphasis, quaffing a large goblet of the peculiar liquor, "richly deserves the honour!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE VOYAGE TO BINGEN.—THE SIMPLE INCIDENTS IN THIS TALE EXCUSED.—THE SITUATION AND CHARACTER OF GERTRUDE.—THE CONVERSATION OF THE LOVERS IN THE TEMPLE.—A FACT CONTRADICTED.—THOUGHTS OCCASIONED BY A MADHOUSE AMONGST THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES OF THE RHINE.

THE next day they again resumed their voyage, and Gertrude's spirits were more cheerful than usual: the air seemed to her lighter, and she breathed with a less painful effort; once more hope entered the breast of Trevylyan; and, as the vessel bounded on, their conversation was steeped in no sombre hues. When Gertrude's health permitted, no temper was so gay, yet so gently gay, as hers; and now the *naïve* sportiveness of her remarks called a smile to the placid lip of Vane, and smoothed the anxious front of Trevylyan himself; as for Du——e, who had much of the boon companion beneath his professional gravity, he broke out every now and then into snatches of French songs and drinking glees, which he declared were the result of the air of Bacharach. Thus conversing, the ruins of Furstenberg, and the echoing vale of Rheindeibach, glided past their sail. Then the old town of Lorch, on the opposite bank (where the red wine is said first to have been made), with the green island before it in the water. Winding round, the stream showed castle upon castle alike in ruins, and built alike upon scarce accessible steeps. Then came the chapel of St. Clements and the opposing village of Asmannshausen; the lofty Rossell, built at the extremest verge of the cliff; and now the tower of Hatto, celebrated by Southey's ballad; and the ancient town of Bingen.

Here they paused a while from their voyage, with the intention of visiting more minutely the Rheingau, or valley of the Rhine.

It must occur to every one of my readers that, in undertaking, as now, in these passages in the history of Trevylyan scarcely so much a tale as an episode in real life, it is very difficult to offer any interest save of the most simple and unexciting kind. It is true that to Trevylyan every day, every hour had its incident; but what are those incidents to others? A cloud in the sky; a smile from the lip of Gertrude; these were to him far more full of events than had been the most varied scenes of his former adventurous career; but the history of the heart is not easily translated into language; and the world will not readily pause from its business to watch the alternations in the cheek of a dying girl.

In the immense sum of human existence what is a single unit? Every sod on which we tread is the grave of some former being: yet is there something that softens without enervating the heart, in tracing in the life of another those emotions that all of us have known ourselves. For who is there that has not, in his progress through life, felt all its ordinary business arrested, and the varieties of fate commuted into one chronicle of the affections? Who has not watched over the passing away of some being, more to him at that epoch than all the world? And this unit, so trivial to the calculation of others, of what inestimable value was it not to him? Retracing in another such recollections, shadowed and mellowed down by time, we feel the wonderful sanctity of human life, we feel what emotions a single being can awake; what a world of hope may be buried in a single grave! And thus we keep alive within ourselves the soft springs of that morality which unites us with our kind and sheds over the harsh scenes and turbulent contests of earth the colouring of a common love.

There is often, too, in the time of year in which such thoughts are presented to us, a certain harmony with the

feelings they awaken. As I write I hear the last sighs of the departing summer, and the sere and yellow leaf is visible in the green of nature. But when this book goes forth into the world, the year will have passed through a deeper cycle of decay; and the first melancholy signs of winter have breathed into the Universal Mind that sadness which associates itself readily with the memory of friends, of feelings, that are no more. The seasons, like ourselves, track their course by something of beauty, or of glory, that is left behind. As the traveller in the land of Palestine sees tomb after tomb rise before him, the landmarks of his way, and the only signs of the holiness of the soil; thus Memory wanders over the most sacred spots in its various world, and traces them but by the graves of the Past.

It was now that Gertrude began to feel the shock her frame had received in the storm upon the Rhine. Cold shiverings frequently seized her; her cough became more hollow, and her form trembled at the slightest breeze.

Vane grew seriously alarmed; he repented that he had yielded to Gertrude's wish of substituting the Rhine for the Tiber or the Arno; and would even now have hurried across the Alps to a warmer clime, if Du——e had not declared that she could not survive the journey, and that her sole chance of regaining her strength was rest. Gertrude herself, however, in the continued delusion of her disease, clung to the belief of recovery, and still supported the hopes of her father, and soothed, with secret talk of the future, the anguish of her betrothed. The reader may remember that in the most touching passage in the ancient tragedians, the most pathetic part of the most pathetic of human poets—the pleading speech of Iphigenia, when imploring for her prolonged life, she impresses you with so soft a picture of its innocence and its beauty, and in this Gertrude resembled the Greek's creation—that she felt, on the verge of death, all the flush, the glow, the loveliness of life. Her youth was filled with hope and many-coloured dreams; she loved, and the hues of morning slept upon the

yet disenchanted earth. The heavens to her were not as the common sky; the wave had its peculiar music to her ear, and the rustling leaves a pleasantness that none whose heart is not bathed in the love and sense of beauty could discern. Therefore it was, in future years, a thought of deep gratitude to Trevylyan that she was so little sensible of her danger; that the landscape caught not the gloom of the grave; and that, in the Greek phrase, "death found her sleeping amongst flowers."

At the end of a few days, another of those sudden turns, common to her malady, occurred in Gertrude's health; her youth and her happiness rallied against the encroaching tyrant, and for the ensuing fortnight she seemed once more within the bounds of hope. During this time they made several excursions into the Rheingau, and finished their tour at the ancient Heidelberg.

One morning, in these excursions, after threading the wood of Niederwald, they gained that small and fairy temple, which, hanging lightly over the mountain's brow, commands one of the noblest landscapes of earth. There, seated side by side, the lovers looked over the beautiful world below; far to the left lay the happy islets, in the embrace of the Rhine, as it wound along the low and curving meadows that stretch away towards Nieder-Ingelheim and Mayence. Glistening in the distance, the opposite Nah swept by the Mause tower, and the ruins of Klopp, crowning the ancient Bingen, into the mother tide. There, on either side the town, were the mountains of St. Roch and Rupert, with some old monastic ruin saddening in the sun. But nearer, below the temple, contrasting all the other features of landscape, yawned a dark and rugged gulf, girt by cragged elms and mouldering towers, the very prototype of the abyss of time—black and fathomless amidst ruin and desolation.

"I think sometimes," said Gertrude, "as in scenes like these we sit together, and, rapt from the actual world, see only the enchantment that distance lends to our view—I

think sometimes, what pleasure it will be hereafter to recall these hours. If ever you should love me less, I need only whisper to you, 'The Rhine,' and will not all the feelings you have now for me return?"

"Ah! there will never be occasion to recall my love for you—it can never decay."

"What a strange thing is life!" said Gertrude; "how unconnected, how desultory seem all its links! Has this sweet pause from trouble, from the ordinary cares of life—has it anything in common with your past career—with your future? You will go into the great world; in a few years hence these moments of leisure and musing will be denied to you; the action that you love and court is a jealous sphere; it allows no wandering, no repose. These moments will then seem to you but as yonder islands that stud the Rhine—the stream lingers by them for a moment, and then hurries on in its rapid course; they vary, but they do not interrupt the tide."

"You are fanciful, my Gertrude; but your simile might be juster. Rather let these banks be as our lives, and this river the one thought that flows eternally by both, blessing each with undying freshness."

Gertrude smiled; and, as Trevylyan's arm encircled her, she sank her beautiful face upon his bosom, he covered it with his kisses, and she thought at the moment that, even had she passed death, that embrace could have recalled her to life.

They pursued their course to Mayence, partly by land, partly along the river. One day, as returning from the vine-clad mountains of Johannisberg, which commands the whole of the Rheingau, the most beautiful valley in the world, they proceeded by water to the town of Ellfeld, Gertrude said:

"There is a thought in your favourite poet which you have often repeated, and which I cannot think true—

'In nature there is nothing melancholy.'

To me, it seems as if a certain melancholy were inseparable from beauty; in the sunniest noon there is a sense of solitude and stillness which pervades the landscape, and even in the flush of life inspires us with a musing and tender sadness. Why is this?"

"I cannot tell," said Trevylyan, mournfully; "but I allow that it is true."

"It is as if," continued the romantic Gertrude, "the spirit of the world spoke to us in the silence, and filled us with a sense of our mortality—a whisper from the religion that belongs to nature, and is ever seeking to unite the earth with the reminiscences of Heaven. Ah, what without a Heaven would be even love!—a perpetual terror of the separation that must one day come! If," she resumed, solemnly, after a momentary pause, and a shadow settled on her young face, "if it be true, Albert, that I must leave you soon——"

"It cannot—it cannot!" cried Trevylyan, wildly; "be still, be silent, I beseech you."

"Look yonder," said Du——e, breaking seasonably in upon the conversation of the lovers; "on that hill to the left, what once was an abbey is now an asylum for the insane. Does it not seem a quiet and serene abode for the unstrung and erring minds that tenant it? What a mystery is there in our conformation!—those strange and bewildered fancies which replace our solid reason, what a moral of our human weakness do they breathe!"

It does indeed induce a dark and singular train of thought, when, in the midst of these lovely scenes, we chance upon this lone retreat for those on whose eyes Nature, perhaps, smiles in vain. *Or is it in vain?* They look down upon the broad Rhine, with its tranquil isles; do their wild delusions endow the river with another name, and people the valleys with no living shapes? Does the broken mirror within reflect back the countenance of real things, or shadows and shapes, crossed, mingled, and bewildered,—the phantasma of a sick man's dreams? Yet,

perchance, one memory unscathed by the general ruin of the brain can make even the beautiful Rhine more beautiful than it is to the common eye;—can calm it with the hues of departed love, and bids its possessor walk over its vine-clad mountains with the beings that have ceased to *be!* There, perhaps, the self-made monarch sits upon his throne and claims the vessels as his fleet, the waves and the valleys as his own. There, the enthusiast, blasted by the light of some imaginary creed, beholds the shapes of angels, and watches in the clouds round the setting sun the pavilions of God. There the victim of forsaken or perished love, mightier than the sorcerers of old, evokes the dead, or recalls the faithless by the philtre of undying fancies. Ah, blessed art thou, the winged power of Imagination that is within us!—conquering even grief—brightening even despair. Thou takest us from the world when reason can no longer bind us to it, and givest to the maniac the inspiration and the solace of the bard! Thou, the parent of the purer love, lingerest like love, when even ourself forsakes us, and lightest up the shattered chambers of the heart with the glory that makes a sanctity of decay.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ELLFELD.—MAYENCE.—HEIDELBERG.—A CONVERSATION BETWEEN VANE AND THE GERMAN STUDENT.—THE RUINS OF THE CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG AND ITS SOLITARY HABITANT.

It was now the full noon; light clouds were bearing up towards the opposite banks of the Rhine, but over the Gothic towers of Ellfeld the sky spread blue and clear; the river danced beside the old grey walls with a sunny wave, and close at hand a vessel crowded with passengers, and loud with eager voices, gave a merry life to the scene. On the opposite bank the hills sloped away into the far horizon,

and one slight skiff in the midst of the waters broke the solitary brightness of the noonday calm.

The town of Ellfeld was the gift of Otho the First to the Church; not far from thence is the crystal spring that gives its name to the delicious grape of Markbrunner.

"Ah!" quoth Du——e, "doubtless the good bishops of Mayence made the best of the vicinity!"

They stayed some little time at this town, and visited the ruins of Scharfenstein; thence proceeding up the river, they passed Nieder Walluf, called the Gate of the Rheingau, and the luxuriant garden of Schierstein; thence, sailing by the castle-seat of the Prince Nassau Usingen, and passing two long and narrow isles, they arrived at Mayence, as the sun shot his last rays upon the waters, gilding the proud cathedral-spire, and breaking the mists that began to gather behind, over the rocks of the Rheingau.

Ever memorable Mayence!—memorable alike for freedom and for song—within those walls how often woke the gallant music of the Troubadour; and how often beside that river did the heart of the maiden tremble to the lay! Within those walls the stout Walpoden first broached the great scheme of the Hanseatic league; and, more than all, O memorable Mayence, thou canst claim the first invention of the mightiest engine of human intellect,—the great leveller of power,—the Demiurgus of the moral world,—the Press! Here, too, lived the maligned hero of the greatest drama of modern genius, the traditionary Faust, illustrating in himself the fate of his successors in dispensing knowledge—held a monster for his wisdom, and consigned to the penalties of hell as a recompense for the benefits he had conferred on earth!

At Mayence, Gertrude heard so much and so constantly of Heidelberg, that she grew impatient to visit that enchanting town, and as Du——e considered the air of Heidelberg more pure and invigorating than that of Mayence they resolved to fix within it their temporary residence. Alas! it was the place destined to close their brief and melancholy

pilgrimage, and to become to the heart of Trevylyan the holiest spot which the earth contained;—the KAABA of the world. But Gertrude, unconscious of her fate, conversed gaily as their carriage rolled rapidly on, and, constantly alive to every new sensation, she touched with her characteristic vivacity on all that they had seen in their previous route. There is a great charm in the observations of one new to the world, if we ourselves have become somewhat tired of "its hack sights and sounds;" we hear in their freshness a voice from our own youth.

In the haunted valley of the Neckar, the most crystal of rivers, stands the town of Heidelberg. The shades of evening gathered round it as their heavy carriage rattled along the antique streets, and not till the next day was Gertrude aware of all the unrivalled beauties that environ the place.

Vane, who was an early riser, went forth alone in the morning to reconnoitre the town; and as he was gazing on the tower of St. Peter, he heard himself suddenly accosted; he turned round and saw the German student whom they had met among the mountains of Taunus, at his elbow.

"Monsieur has chosen well in coming hither," said the student; "and I trust our town will not disappoint his expectations." Vane answered with courtesy, and the German offering to accompany him in his walk, their conversation fell naturally on the life of a university, and the current education of the German people.

"It is surprising," said the student, "that men are eternally inventing new systems of education, and yet persevering in the old. How many years ago is it since Fichte predicted in the system of Pestalozzi the regeneration of the German people? What has it done? We admire—we praise, and we blunder on in the very course Pestalozzi proves to be erroneous. Certainly," continued the student, "there must be some radical defect in a system of culture in which genius is an exception, and dulness the result. Yet here, in our German universities, everything proves

that education without equitable institutions avails little in the general formation of character. Here the young men of the colleges mix on the most equal terms; they are daring, romantic, enamoured of freedom even to its madness; they leave the university, no political career continues the train of mind they had acquired; they plunge into obscurity; live scattered and separate, and the student inebriated with Schiller sinks into the passive priest or the lethargic baron. His college career, so far from indicating his future life, exactly reverses it; he is brought up in one course in order to proceed in another. And this I hold to be the universal error of education in all countries; they conceive it a certain something to be finished at a certain age. They do not make it a part of the continuous history of life, but a wandering from it."

"You have been in England?" asked Vane.

"Yes: I have travelled over nearly the whole of it on foot. I was poor at that time, and imagining there was a sort of masonry between all men of letters, I inquired at each town for the *savans*, and asked money of them as a matter of course."

Vane almost laughed outright at the simplicity and *naïve* unconsciousness of degradation with which the student proclaimed himself a public beggar.

"And how did you generally succeed?"

"In most cases I was threatened with the stocks, and twice I was consigned by the *juge de paix* to the village police, to be passed to some mystic Mecca they were pleased to entitle 'a parish.' Ah!" (continued the German with much *bonhomie*) "it was a pity to see in a great nation so much value attached to such a trifle as money. But what surprised me greatly was the tone of your poetry. Madame de Staël, who knew perhaps as much of England as she did of Germany, tells us that its chief character is the *chivalresque;* and, excepting only Scott, who, by the way, is *not* English, I did not find one chivalrous poet among you. Yet," continued the student, "between our-

selves, I fancy that in our present age of civilisation, there is an unexamined mistake in the general mind as to the value of poetry. It delights still as ever, but it has ceased to teach. The prose of the heart enlightens, touches, rouses, far more than poetry. Your most philosophical poets would be commonplace if turned into prose. Verse cannot contain the refining subtle thoughts which a great prose writer embodies; the rhyme eternally cripples it; it properly deals with the common problems of human nature which are now hackneyed, and not with the nice and philosophising corollaries which may be drawn from them. Thus, though it would seem at first a paradox, commonplace is more the element of poetry than of prose."

This sentiment charmed Vane, who had nothing of the poet about him; and he took the student to share their breakfast at the inn, with a complacency he rarely experienced at the remeeting with a new acquaintance.

After breakfast, our party proceeded through the town towards the wonderful castle which is its chief attraction, and the noblest wreck of German grandeur.

And now pausing, the mountain yet unscaled, the stately ruin frowned upon them, girt by its massive walls and hanging terraces, round which from place to place clung the dwarfed and various foliage. High at the rear rose the huge mountain, covered, save at its extreme summit, with dark trees, and concealing in its mysterious breast the shadowy beings of the legendary world. But towards the ruins, and up a steep ascent, you may see a few scattered sheep thinly studding the broken ground. Aloft, above the ramparts, rose, desolate and huge, the Palace of the Electors of the Palatinate. In its broken walls you may trace the tokens of the lightning that blasted its ancient pomp, but still leaves in the vast extent of pile a fitting monument of the memory of Charlemagne. Below, in the distance, spread the plain far and spacious, till the shadowy river, with one solitary sail upon its breast, united the melancholy scene of earth with the autumnal sky.

"See," said Vane, pointing to two peasants who were conversing near them on the matters of their little trade, utterly unconscious of the associations of the spot, "see, after all that is said and done about human greatness, it is always the greatness of the few. Ages pass, and leave the poor herd, the mass of men, eternally the same—hewers of wood and drawers of water. The pomp of princes has its ebb and flow, but the peasant sells his fruit as gaily to the stranger on the ruins as to the emperor in the palace."

"Will it be always so?" said the student.

"Let us hope not, for the sake of permanence in glory," said Trevylyan. "Had *a people* built yonder palace, its splendour would never have passed away."

Vane shrugged his shoulders, and Du——e took snuff.

But all the impressions produced by the castle at a distance are as nothing when you stand within its vast area and behold the architecture of all ages blended into one mighty ruin! The rich hues of the masonry, the sweeping façades—every description of building which man ever framed for war or for luxury—is here; all having only the common character—RUIN. The feudal rampart, the yawning fosse, the rude tower, the splendid arch,—the strength of a fortress, the magnificence of a palace,—all united, strike upon the soul like the history of a fallen empire in all its epochs.

"There is one singular habitant of these ruins," said the student; "a solitary painter, who has dwelt here some twenty years, companioned only by his Art. No other apartment but that which he tenants is occupied by a human being."

"What a poetical existence!" cried Gertrude, enchanted with a solitude so full of associations.

"Perhaps so," said the cruel Vane, ever anxious to dispel an illusion, "but more probably custom has deadened to him all that overpowers ourselves with awe; and he may tread among those ruins rather seeking to pick up some rude morsel of antiquity, than feeding his imagination with

the dim traditions that invest them with so august a poetry."

"Monsieur's conjecture has something of the truth in it," said the German; "but then the painter is a Frenchman."

There is a sense of fatality in the singular mournfulness and majesty which belong to the ruins of Heidelberg; contrasting the vastness of the strength with the utterness of the ruin. It has been twice struck with lightning, and is the wreck of the elements, not of man: during the great siege it sustained, the lightning is supposed to have struck the powder magazine by accident.

What a scene for some great imaginative work! What a mocking interference of the wrath of nature in the puny contests of men! One stroke of "the red right arm" above us, crushing the triumph of ages, and laughing to scorn the power of the beleaguers and the valour of the besieged!

They passed the whole day among these stupendous ruins, and felt, when they descended to their inn, as if they had left the caverns of some mighty tomb.

CHAPTER XXX.

NO PART OF THE EARTH REALLY SOLITARY.—THE SONG OF THE FAIRIES.—THE SACRED SPOT.—THE WITCH OF THE EVIL WINDS.—THE SPELL AND THE DUTY OF THE FAIRIES.

But in what spot of the world is there ever utter solitude? The vanity of man supposes that loneliness is *his* absence! Who shall say what millions of spiritual beings glide invisibly among scenes apparently the most deserted? Or what know we of our own mechanism, that we should deny the possibility of life and motion to things that we cannot ourselves recognise?

At moonlight, in the Great Court of Heidelberg, on the

borders of the shattered basin overgrown with weeds, the following song was heard by the melancholy shades that roam at night through the mouldering halls of old, and the gloomy hollows in the mountain of Heidelberg.

SONG OF THE FAIRIES IN THE RUINS OF HEIDELBERG.

"From the woods and the glossy green,
With the wild thyme strewn;
From the rivers whose crisped sheen
Is kissed by the trembling moon;—
While the dwarf looks out from his mountain cave,
And the erl king from his lair,
And the water-nymph from her moaning wave,—
We skirr the limber air.

"There's a smile on the vine-clad shore,
A smile on the castled heights;
They dream back the days of yore,
And they smile at our roundel rites!
Our roundel rites!

"Lightly we tread these halls around,
Lightly tread we;
Yet, hark! we have scared with a single sound
The moping owl on the breathless tree,
And the goblin sprites!
Ha! ha! we have scared with a single sound
The old grey owl on the breathless tree,
And the goblin sprites!"

"They come not," said Pipalee; "yet the banquet is prepared, and the poor queen will be glad of some refreshment."

"What a pity! all the rose-leaves will be over-broiled," said Nip.

"Let us amuse ourselves with the old painter," quoth Trip, springing over the ruins.

"Well said," cried Pipalee and Nip: and all three, leaving my lord-treasurer amazed at their levity, whisked into the painter's apartment. Permitting them to throw the

ink over their victim's papers, break his pencils, mix his colours, mislay his nightcap, and go whiz against his face in the shape of a great bat, till the astonished Frenchman began to think the pensive goblins of the place had taken a sprightly fit,—we hasten to a small green spot some little way from the town, in the valley of the Neckar, and by the banks of its silver stream. It was circled round by dark trees, save on that side bordered by the river. The wild flowers sprang profusely from the turf which yet was smooth and singularly green. And there was the German fairy describing a circle round the spot, and making his elvish spells. And Nymphalin sat droopingly in the centre, shading her face, which was bowed down as the head of a water-lily, and weeping crystal tears.

There came a hollow murmur through the trees, and a rush as of a mighty wind, and a dark form emerged from the shadow and approached the spot.

The face was wrinkled and old, and stern with a malevolent and evil aspect. The frame was lean and gaunt, and supported by a staff, and a short grey mantle covered its bended shoulders.

"Things of the moonbeam!" said the form, in a shrill and ghastly voice; "what want ye here? and why charm ye this spot from the coming of me and mine?"

"Dark witch of the blight and blast," answered the fairy, "THOU that nippest the herb in its tender youth, and eatest up the core of the soft bud; behold, it is but a small spot that the fairies claim from thy demesnes, and on which, through frost and heat, they will keep the herbage green and the air gentle in its sighs!"

"And, wherefore, O dweller in the crevices of the earth! wherefore wouldst thou guard this spot from the curses of the seasons?"

"We know by our instinct," answered the fairy, "that this spot will become the grave of one whom the fairies love; hither, by an unfelt influence, shall we guide her yet living steps; and in gazing upon this spot, shall the desire

of quiet and the resignation to death steal upon her soul. Behold, throughout the universe, all things are at war with one another;—the lion with the lamb; the serpent with the bird; and even the gentlest bird itself with the moth of the air, or the worm of the humble earth! What then to men, and to the spirits transcending men, is so lovely and so sacred as a being that harmeth none? what so beautiful as Innocence? what so mournful as its untimely tomb? And shall not that tomb be sacred? shall it not be our peculiar care? May we not mourn over it as at the passing away of some fair miracle in Nature; too tender to endure, too rare to be forgotten? It is for this, O dread waker of the blast! that the fairies would consecrate this little spot; for this they would charm away from its tranquil turf the wandering ghoul and the evil children of the night. Here, not the ill-omened owl, nor the blind bat, nor the unclean worm, shall come. And thou shouldst have neither will nor power to nip the flowers of spring, nor sear the green herbs of summer. Is it not, dark mother of the evil winds! is it not *our* immemorial office to tend the grave of Innocence, and keep fresh the flowers round the resting-place of Virgin Love?"

Then the witch drew her cloak round her, and muttered to herself, and without further answer turned away among the trees and vanished, as the breath of the east wind, which goeth with her as her comrade, scattered the melancholy leaves along her path!

CHAPTER XXXI.

GERTRUDE AND TREVYLYAN, WHEN THE FORMER IS AWAKENED TO THE APPROACH OF DEATH.

The next day, Gertrude and her companions went along the banks of the haunted Neckar. She had passed a sleep-

less and painful night, and her evanescent and childlike spirits had sobered down into a melancholy and thoughtful mood. She leaned back in an open carriage with Trevylyan, ever constant, by her side, while Du——e and Vane rode slowly in advance. Trevylyan tried in vain to cheer her; even his attempts (usually so eagerly received) to charm her duller moments by tale or legend were, in this instance, fruitless. She shook her head gently—pressed his hand, and said, "No, dear Trevylyan—no; even your art fails to-day, but your kindness never!" and pressing his hand to her lips, she burst passionately into tears.

Alarmed and anxious, he clasped her to his breast, and strove to lift her face, as it drooped on its resting-place, and kiss away its tears. "Oh!" said she, at length, "do not despise my weakness, I am overcome by my own thoughts: I look upon the world, and see that it is fair and good; I look upon you, and I see all that I can venerate and adore. Life seems to me so sweet, and the earth so lovely; can you wonder, then, that I should shrink at the thought of death? Nay, interrupt me not, dear Albert; the thought must be borne and braved. I have not cherished, I have not yielded to it through my long-increasing illness, but there have been times when it has forced itself upon me; and now, *now* more palpably than ever. Do not think me weak and childish, I never feared death till I knew you; but to see you no more—never again to touch this dear hand—never to thank you for your love—never to be sensible of your care—to lie down and sleep, *and never, never, once more to dream of you!* Ah! that is a bitter thought! but I will brave it—yes, brave it as one worthy of your regard."

Trevylyan, choked by his emotions, covered his own face with his hands, and, leaning back in the carriage, vainly struggled with his sobs.

"Perhaps," she said, yet ever and anon clinging to the hope that had utterly abandoned *him*, "perhaps, I may yet deceive myself; and my love for you, which seems to me as

if it could conquer death, may bear me up against this fell disease;—the hope to live with you—to watch you—to share your high dreams, and oh! above all, to soothe you in sorrow and sickness, as you have soothed me—has not that hope something that may support even this sinking frame? And who shall love thee as I love? who see thee as I have seen? who pray for thee in gratitude and tears as I have prayed? Oh, Albert, so little am I jealous of you, so little do I think of myself in comparison, that I could close my eyes happily on the world if I knew that what I could be to thee another will be!"

"Gertrude," said Trevylyan; and lifting up his colourless face, he gazed upon her with an earnest and calm solemnity. "Gertrude, let us be united at once! if Fate must sever us, let her cut the last tie too; let us feel that at least upon earth we have been all in all to each other; let us defy death, even as it frowns upon us. Be mine to-morrow—this day—oh God! be mine!"

Over even that pale countenance, beneath whose hues the lamp of life so faintly fluttered, a deep, radiant flush passed one moment, lighting up the beautiful ruin with the glow of maiden youth and impassioned hope, and then died rapidly away.

"No, Albert," she said, sighing; "no! it must not be: far easier would come the pang to you, while yet we are not wholly united; and for my own part I am selfish, and feel as if I should leave a tenderer remembrance on your heart thus parted;—tenderer, but not so sad. I would not wish you to feel yourself widowed to my memory; I would not cling like a blight to your fair prospects of the future. Remember me rather as a dream—as something never wholly won, and therefore asking no fidelity but that of kind and forbearing thoughts. Do you remember one evening as we sailed along the Rhine—ah! happy, happy hour!—that we heard from the banks a strain of music not so skilfully played as to be worth listening to for itself, but, suiting as it did the hour and the scene, we remained silent,

that we might hear it the better; and when it died insensibly upon the waters, a certain melancholy stole over us; we felt that a something that softened the landscape had gone, and we conversed less lightly than before? Just so, my own loved—my own adored Trevylyan, just so is the influence that our brief love—your poor Gertrude's existence, should bequeath to your remembrance. A sound—a presence—should haunt you for a little while, but no more, ere you again become sensible of the glories that court your way!"

But as Gertrude said this, she turned to Trevylyan, and seeing his agony, she could refrain no longer; she felt that to soothe was to insult; and, throwing herself upon his breast, they mingled their tears together.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A SPOT TO BE BURIED IN.

On their return homeward, Du——e took the third seat in the carriage, and endeavoured, with his usual vivacity, to cheer the spirits of his companions; and such was the elasticity of Gertrude's nature, that with her he, to a certain degree, succeeded in his kindly attempt. Quickly alive to the charms of scenery, she entered by degrees into the external beauties which every turn in the road opened to their view; and the silvery smoothness of the river, that made the constant attraction of the landscape; the serenity of the time, and the clearness of the heavens, tended to tranquillise a mind that, like a sunflower, so instinctively turned from the shadow to the light.

Once Du——e stopped the carriage in a spot of herbage, bedded among the trees, and said to Gertrude, "We are now in one of the many places along the Neckar which your favourite traditions serve to consecrate. Amidst yonder

copses, in the early ages of Christianity, there dwelt a hermit, who, though young in years, was renowned for the sanctity of his life. None knew whence he came, nor for what cause he had limited the circle of life to the seclusion of his cell. He rarely spoke, save when his ghostly advice or his kindly prayer was needed; he lived upon herbs, and the wild fruits which the peasants brought to his cave; and every morning and every evening he came to this spot to fill his pitcher from the water of the stream. But here he was observed to linger long after his task was done, and to sit gazing upon the walls of a convent which then rose upon the opposite side of the bank, though now even its ruins are gone. Gradually his health gave way beneath the austerities he practised; and one evening he was found by some fishermen insensible on the turf. They bore him for medical aid to the opposite convent; and one of the sisterhood, the daughter of a prince, was summoned to attend the recluse. But when his eyes opened upon hers, a sudden recognition appeared to seize both. He spoke; and the sister threw herself on the couch of the dying man, and shrieked forth a name, the most famous in the surrounding country, —the name of a once noted minstrel, who, in those rude times, had mingled the poet with the lawless chief, and was supposed, years since, to have fallen in one of the desperate frays between prince and outlaw, which were then common; storming the very castle which held her—now the pious nun, then the beauty and presider over the tournament and galliard. In her arms the spirit of the hermit passed away. She survived but a few hours, and left conjecture busy with a history to which it never obtained further clue. Many a troubadour in later times furnished forth in poetry the details which truth refused to supply; and the place where the hermit at sunrise and sunset ever came to gaze upon the convent became consecrated by song."

The place invested with this legendary interest was impressed with a singular aspect of melancholy quiet; wild flowers yet lingered on the turf, whose grassy sedges gently

overhung the Neckar, that murmured amidst them with a plaintive music. Not a wind stirred the trees; but at a little distance from the place, the spire of a church rose amidst the copse; and, as they paused, they suddenly heard from the holy building the bell that summons to the burial of the dead. It came on the ear in such harmony with the spot, with the hour, with the breathing calm, that it thrilled to the heart of each with an inexpressible power. It was like the voice of another world—that amidst the solitude of nature summoned the lulled spirit from the cares of this;—it invited, not repulsed, and had in its tone more of softness than of awe.

Gertrude turned, with tears starting to her eyes, and, laying her hand on Trevylyan's, whispered: "In such a spot, so calm, so sequestered, yet in the neighbourhood of the house of God, would I wish this broken frame to be consigned to rest."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE CONCLUSION OF THIS TALE.

From that day Gertrude's spirit resumed its wonted cheerfulness, and for the ensuing week she never reverted to her approaching fate; she seemed once more to have grown unconscious of its limit. Perhaps she sought, anxious for Trevylyan to the last, not to throw additional gloom over their earthly separation; or, perhaps, once steadily regarding the certainty of her doom, its terrors vanished. The chords of thought, vibrating to the subtlest emotions, may be changed by a single incident, or in a single hour; a sound of sacred music, a green and quiet burial-place, may convert the form of death into the aspect of an angel. And therefore wisely, and with a beautiful lore, did the Greeks strip the grave of its unreal gloom; wisely did they body forth the great principle of Rest by solemn and lovely im-

ages—unconscious of the northern madness that made a Spectre of REPOSE!

But while Gertrude's *spirit* resumed its healthful tone, her *frame* rapidly declined, and a few days now could do the ravage of months a little while before.

One evening, amidst the desolate ruins of Heidelberg, Trevylyan, who had gone forth alone to indulge the thoughts which he strove to stifle in Gertrude's presence, suddenly encountered Vane. That calm and almost callous pupil of the adversities of the world was standing alone, and gazing upon the shattered casements and riven tower, through which the sun now cast its slant and parting ray.

Trevylyan, who had never loved this cold and unsusceptible man, save for the sake of Gertrude, felt now almost a hatred creep over him, as he thought in such a time, and with death fastening upon the flower of his house, he could yet be calm, and smile, and muse, and moralise, and play the common part of the world. He strode slowly up to him, and standing full before him, said with a hollow voice and writhing smile: "You amuse yourself pleasantly, sir: this is a fine scene;—and to meditate over griefs a thousand years hushed to rest is better than watching over a sick girl and eating away your heart with fear!"

Vane looked at him quietly, but intently, and made no reply.

"Vane!" continued Trevylyan, with the same preternatural attempt at calm; "Vane, in a few days all will be over, and you and I, the things, the plotters, the false men of the world, will be left alone—left by the sole being that graces our dull life, that makes by her love either of us worthy of a thought!"

Vane started, and turned away his face. "You are cruel," said he, with a faltering voice.

"What, man!" shouted Trevylyan, seizing him abruptly by the arm, "can *you* feel? Is your cold heart touched? Come then," added he, with a wild laugh, "come, let us be friends!"

Vane drew himself aside, with a certain dignity, that impressed Trevylyan even at that hour. "Some years hence," said he, "you will be called cold as I am; sorrow will teach you the wisdom of indifference—it is a bitter school, sir,—a bitter school! But think you that I do indeed see unmoved my last hope shivered—the last tie that binds me to my kind? No, no! I feel it as a man may feel; I cloak it as a man grown grey in misfortune should do! My child is more to me than your betrothed to you; for you are young and wealthy, and life smiles before you; but I—no more, sir—no more."

"Forgive me," said Trevylyan, humbly, "I have wronged you; but Gertrude is an excuse for any crime of love; and now listen to my last prayer—give her to me—even on the verge of the grave. Death cannot seize her in the arms—in the vigils of a love like mine."

Vane shuddered. "It were to wed the dead," said he—"No!"

Trevylyan drew back, and, without another word, hurried away; he returned to the town; he sought, with methodical calmness, the owner of the piece of ground in which Gertrude had wished to be buried. He purchased it, and that very night he sought the priest of a neighbouring church, and directed it should be consecrated according to the due rite and ceremonial.

The priest, an aged and pious man, was struck by the request, and the air of him who made it.

"Shall it be done forthwith, sir?" said he, hesitating.

"Forthwith," answered Trevylyan, with a calm smile—"a bridegroom, you know, is naturally impatient."

For the next three days, Gertrude was so ill as to be confined to her bed. All that time Trevylyan sat outside her door, without speaking, scarcely lifting his eyes from the ground. The attendants passed to and fro—he heeded them not; perhaps as even the foreign menials turned aside and wiped their eyes, and prayed God to comfort him, he required compassion less at that time than any other.

There is a stupefaction in woe, and the heart sleeps without a pang when exhausted by its afflictions.

But on the fourth day Gertrude rose, and was carried down (how changed, yet how lovely ever!) to their common apartment. During those three days the priest had been with her often, and her spirit, full of religion from her childhood, had been unspeakably soothed by his comfort. She took food from the hand of Trevylyan; she smiled on him as sweetly as of old. She conversed with him, though with a faint voice, and at broken intervals. But she felt no pain; life ebbed away gradually, and without a pang. "My father," she said to Vane, whose features still bore their usual calm, whatever might have passed within, "I know that you will grieve when I am gone more than the world might guess; for I alone know what you were years ago, ere friends left you and fortune frowned, and ere my poor mother died. But do not—do not believe that hope and comfort leave you with me. Till the heaven pass away from the earth there shall be comfort and hope for all."

They did not lodge in the town, but had fixed their abode on its outskirts, and within sight of the Neckar: and from the window they saw a light sail gliding gaily by, till it passed, and solitude once more rested upon the waters.

"The sail passes from our eyes," said Gertrude, pointing to it, "but still it glides on as happily, though we see it no more; and I feel—yes, father, I feel—I know that it is so with *us*. We glide down the river of time from the eyes of men, but we cease not the less to *be!*"

And now, as the twilight descended, she expressed a wish before she retired to rest, to be left alone with Trevylyan. He was not then sitting by her side, for he would not trust himself to do so; but with his face averted, at a little distance from her. She called him by his name; he answered not nor turned. Weak as she was, she raised herself from the sofa, and crept gently along the floor till she came to him, and sank in his arms.

"Ah, unkind!" she said, "unkind for once! Will you turn away from me? Come, let us look once more on the river: see! the night darkens over it. Our pleasant voyage, the type of our love, is finished; our sail may be unfurled no more. Never again can your voice soothe the lassitude of sickness with the legend and the song—the course is run, the vessel is broken up, night closes over its fragments; but now, in this hour, love me, be kind to me as ever. Still let me be your own Gertrude—still let me close my eyes this night, as before, with the sweet consciousness that I am loved."

"Loved!—O Gertrude! speak not to me thus!"

"Come, that is yourself again!" and she clung with weak arms caressingly to his breast. "And now," she said more solemnly, "let us forget that we are mortal; let us remember only that life is a part, not the whole, of our career; let us feel in this soft hour, and while yet we are unsevered, the presence of The Eternal that is within us, so that it shall not be as death, but as a short absence; and when once the pang of parting is over, you must think only that we are shortly to meet again. What! you turn from me still? See, I do not weep or grieve, I have conquered the pang of our absence; will you be outdone by me? Do you remember, Albert, that you once told me how the wisest of the sages of old, in prison, and before death, consoled his friends with the proof of the immortality of the soul? Is it not a consolation?—does it not suffice; or will you deem it wise from the lips of wisdom, but vain from the lips of love?"

"Hush, hush!" said Trevylyan, wildly; "or I shall think you an angel already."

But let us close this commune, and leave unrevealed the *last* sacred words that ever passed between them upon earth.

When Vane and the physician stole back softly into the room, Trevylyan motioned to them to be still: "She sleeps," he whispered; "hush!" And in truth, wearied out by her own emotions, and lulled by the belief that she had soothed

one with whom her heart dwelt now, as ever, she had fallen into sleep, or it may be insensibility, on his breast. There as she lay, so fair, so frail, so delicate, the twilight deepened into shade, and the first star, like the hope of the future, broke forth upon the darkness of the earth.

Nothing could equal the stillness without, save that which lay breathlessly within. For not one of the group stirred or spoke, and Trevylyan, bending over her, never took his eyes from her face, watching the parted lips, and fancying that he imbibed the breath. Alas, the breath was still! from sleep to death she had glided without a sigh: happy, most happy in that death!—cradled in the arms of unchanged love, and brightened in her last thought by the consciousness of innocence and the assurances of Heaven!

* * * * *

Trevylyan, after a long sojourn on the Continent, returned to England. He plunged into active life, and became what is termed in this age of little names a distinguished and noted man. But what was mainly remarkable in his future conduct was his impatience of rest. He eagerly courted all occupations, even of the most varied and motley kind. Business,—letters,—ambition,—pleasure. He suffered no pause in his career; and leisure to him was as care to others. He lived in the world, as the worldly do, discharging its duties, fostering its affections, and fulfilling its career. But there was a deep and wintry change within him—*the sunlight of his life was gone;* the loveliness of romance had left the earth. The stem was proof as heretofore to the blast, but the green leaves were severed from it for ever, and the bird had forsaken its boughs. Once he had idolised the beauty that is born of song; the glory and the ardour that invest such thoughts as are not of our common clay; but the well of enthusiasm was dried up, and the golden bowl was broken at the fountain. With Gertrude the poetry of existence was gone. As she herself had described her loss, a music had ceased to breathe along the

face of things; and though the bark might sail on as swiftly, and the stream swell with as proud a wave, a something that had vibrated on the heart was still, and the magic of the voyage was no more.

And Gertrude sleeps on the spot where she wished her last couch to be made; and far—oh, far dearer is that small spot on the distant banks of the gliding Neckar to Trevylyan's heart, than all the broad lands and fertile fields of his ancestral domain. The turf, too, preserves its emerald greenness; and it would seem to me that the field flowers spring up by the sides of the simple tomb even more profusely than of old. A curve in the bank breaks the tide of the Neckar: and therefore its stream pauses, as if to linger reluctantly, by that solitary grave, and to mourn among the rustling sedges ere it passes on. And I have thought, when I last looked upon that quiet place,—when I saw the turf so fresh, and the flowers so bright of hue, that aerial hands might *indeed* tend the sod; that it was by no *imaginary* spells that I summoned the fairies to my tale; that in truth, and with vigils constant though unseen, they yet kept from all polluting footsteps, and from the harsher influence of the seasons, the grave of one who so loved their race; and who, in her gentle and spotless virtue, claimed kindred with the beautiful Ideal of the world. Is there one of us who has not known some being for whom it seemed not too wild a phantasy to indulge such dreams?

THE END.

ZICCI

ZICCI.

A TALE.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

In the gardens at Naples, one summer evening in the last century, some four or five gentlemen were seated under a tree, drinking their sherbet, and listening, in the intervals of conversation, to the music which enlivened that gay and favourite resort of an indolent population. One of this little party was a young Englishman, who had been the life of the whole group, but who, for the last few moments, had sunk into a gloomy and abstracted reverie. One of his countrymen observed this sudden gloom, and tapping him on the back, said, "Glyndon, why, what ails you—are you ill? you have grown quite pale—you tremble—is it a sudden chill? You had better go home; these Italian nights are often dangerous to our English constitutions."

"No, I am well now—it was but a passing shudder; I cannot account for it myself."

A man apparently of about thirty years of age, and of a mien and countenance strikingly superior to those around him, turned abruptly, and looked steadfastly at Glyndon.

"I think I understand what you mean," said he; "and perhaps," he added, with a grave smile, "I could explain it better than yourself." Here, turning to the others, he added: "You must often have felt, gentlemen—each and all

of you—especially when sitting alone at night, a strange and unaccountable sensation of coldness and awe creep over you; your blood curdles, and the heart stands still; the limbs shiver, the hair bristles; you are afraid to look up, to turn your eyes to the darker corners of the room; you have a horrible fancy that something unearthly is at hand; presently the whole spell, if I may so call it, passes away, and you are ready to laugh at your own weakness. Have you not often felt what I have thus imperfectly described? If so, you can understand what our young friend has just experienced, even amidst the delights of this magical scene, and amidst the balmy whispers of a July night."

"Sir," replied Glyndon, evidently much surprised, "you have defined exactly the nature of that shudder which came over me. But how could my manner be so faithful an index to my impressions?"

"I know the signs of the visitation," returned the stranger, gravely; "they are not to be mistaken by one of my experience."

All the gentlemen present then declared that they could comprehend, and had felt, what the stranger had described.

"According to one of our national superstitions," said Merton, the Englishman who had first addressed Glyndon, "the moment you so feel your blood creep, and your hair stand on end, some one is walking over the spot which shall be your grave."

"There are in all lands different superstitions to account for so common an occurrence," replied the stranger; "one sect among the Arabians hold that at that instant God is deciding the hour either of your death or that of some one dear to you. The African savage, whose imagination is darkened by the hideous rites of his gloomy idolatry, believes that the Evil Spirit is pulling you towards him by the hair;—so do the Grotesque and the Terrible mingle with each other."

"It is evidently a mere physical accident—a derange-

ment of the stomach—a chill of the blood," said a young Neapolitan.

"Then why is it always coupled in all nations with some superstitious presentiment or terror—some connection between the material frame and the supposed world without us?" asked the stranger. "For my part, I think——"

"What do you think, sir?" asked Glyndon, curiously.

"I think," continued the stranger, "that it is the repugnance and horror of that which is human about us—to something, indeed, invisible, but antipathetic to our own nature; and from a knowledge of which we are happily secured by the imperfection of our senses."

"You are a believer in spirits, then?" asked Merton, with an incredulous smile.

"Nay, I said not so; I can form no notion of a spirit, as the metaphysicians do, and certainly no fear of one; but there may be forms of matter as invisible and impalpable to us as the animalculæ to which I have compared them. The monster that lives and dies in a drop of water—carnivorous—insatiable—subsisting on the creatures minuter than himself, is not less deadly in his wrath, less ferocious in his nature, than the tiger of the desert. There may be things around us malignant and hostile to men, if Providence had not placed a wall between them and us, merely by different modifications of matter."

"And could that wall never be removed?" asked young Glyndon, abruptly. "Are the traditions of sorcerer and wizard, universal and immemorial as they are, merely fables?"

"Perhaps yes; perhaps no," answered the stranger, indifferently. "But who, in an age in which the reason has chosen its proper bounds, would be mad enough to break the partition that divides him from the boa and the lion, to repine at and rebel against the law of nature, which confines the shark to the great deep? Enough of these idle speculations."

Here the stranger rose, summoned the attendant, paid

for his sherbet, and, bowing slightly to the company, soon disappeared among the trees.

"Who is that gentleman?" asked Glyndon, eagerly.

The rest looked at each other, without replying, for some moments.

"I never saw him before," said Merton, at last.

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"I have met him often," said the Neapolitan, who was named Count Cetoxa; "it was, if you remember, as my companion that he joined you. He has been some months at Naples; he is very rich—indeed, enormously so. Our acquaintance commenced in a strange way."

"How was it?"

"I had been playing at a public gaming-house, and had lost considerably. I rose from the table, resolved no longer to tempt Fortune, when this gentleman, who had hitherto been a spectator, laying his hand on my arm, said, with politeness, 'Sir, I see you enjoy play—I dislike it; but I yet wish to have some interest in what is going on. Will you play this sum for me? the risk is mine—the half-profits yours.' I was startled, as you may suppose, at such an address; but the stranger had an air and tone with him it was impossible to resist; besides, I was burning to recover my losses, and should not have risen had I any money left about me. I told him I would accept his offer, provided we shared the risk as well as profits. 'As you will,' said he, smiling, 'we need have no scruple, for you will be sure to win.' I sate down; the stranger stood behind me; my luck rose; I invariably won. In fact, I rose from the table a rich man."

"There can be no foul play at the public tables, especially when foul play would make against the bank."

"Certainly not," replied the Count. "But our good fortune was indeed marvellous—so extraordinary that a Sicilian (the Sicilians are all ill-bred, bad-tempered fellows) grew angry and insolent. 'Sir,' said he, turning to my

new friend, 'you have no business to stand so near to the table. I do not understand this; you have not acted fairly.' The spectator replied with great composure, that he had done nothing against the rules—that he was very sorry that one man could not win without another man losing; and that he could not act unfairly even if disposed to do so. The Sicilian took the stranger's mildness for apprehension, blustered more loudly, and at length fairly challenged him. 'I never seek a quarrel, and I never shun a danger,' returned my partner; and six or seven of us adjourned to the garden behind the house. I was, of course, my partner's second. He took me aside. 'This man will die,' said he; 'see that he is buried privately in the church at St. Januario, by the side of his father.'

"'Did you know his family?' I asked with great surprise. He made no answer, but drew his sword, and walked deliberately to the spot we had selected. The Sicilian was a renowned swordsman; nevertheless, in the third pass he was run through the body. I went up to him; he could scarcely speak. 'Have you any request to make—any affairs to settle?' He shook his head. 'Where would you wish to be interred?' He pointed towards the Sicilian coast. 'What!' said I, in surprise, 'not by the side of your father?' As I spoke his face altered terribly—he uttered a piercing shriek;—the blood gushed from his mouth—and he fell dead. The most strange part of the story is to come. We buried him in the church of St. Januario. In doing so, we took up his father's coffin; the lid came off in moving it, and the skeleton was visible. In the hollow of the skull we found a very slender wire of sharp steel; this caused great surprise and inquiry. The father, who was rich and a miser, had died suddenly, and been buried in haste, owing, it was said, to the heat of the weather. Suspicion once awakened, the examination became minute. The old man's servant was questioned, and at last confessed that the son had murdered the sire: the contrivance was ingenious; the wire was so slender, that it pierced to

the brain, and drew but one drop of blood, which the grey hairs concealed. The accomplice was executed."

"And this stranger,—did he give evidence? did he account or——"

"No," interrupted the Count; "he declared that he had by accident visited the church that morning; that he had observed the tombstone of the Count Salvolio; that his guide had told him the Count's son was in Naples,—a spendthrift and a gambler. While we were at play, he had heard the Count mentioned by name at the table; and when the challenge was given and accepted, it had occurred to him to name the place of burial, by an instinct he could not account for."

"A very lame story," said Merton.

"Yes! but we Italians are superstitious;—the alleged instinct was regarded as the whisper of Providence—the stranger became an object of universal interest and curiosity. His wealth, his manner of living, his extraordinary personal beauty, have assisted also to make him the rage."

"What is his name?" asked Glyndon.

"Zicci. Signor Zicci."

"Is it not an Italian name? He speaks English like a native."

"So he does French and German, as well as Italian to my knowledge. But he declares himself a Corsican by birth, though I cannot hear of any eminent Corsican family of that name. However, what matters his birth or parentage; he is rich, generous, and the best swordsman I ever saw in my life. Who would affront him?"

"Not I, certainly," said Merton, rising. "Come, Glyndon; shall we seek our hotel? It is almost daylight. Adieu, signor."

"What think you of this story?" said Glyndon, as the young men walked homeward.

"Why, it is very clear that this Zicci is some impostor—some clever rogue; and the Neapolitan shares booty, and puffs him off with all the hacknied charlatanism of the

marvellous. An unknown adventurer gets into society, by being made an object of awe and curiosity;—he is devilish handsome; and the women are quite content to receive him without any other recommendation than his own face and Cetoxa's fables."

"I cannot agree with you. Cetoxa, though a gambler and a rake, is a nobleman of birth and high repute for courage and honour. Besides, this stranger, with his grand features and lofty air—so calm—so unobtrusive—has nothing in common with the forward garrulity of an impostor."

"My dear Glyndon, pardon me; but you have not yet acquired any knowledge of the world: the stranger makes the best of a fine person, and his *grand air* is but a trick of the trade. But to change the subject:—how gets on the love affair?"

"O, Isabel could not see me to-night. The old woman gave me a note of excuse."

"You must not marry her; what would they all say at home?"

"Let us enjoy the present," said Glyndon, with vivacity; "we are young, rich, good-looking: let us not think of to-morrow."

"Bravo, Glyndon! Here we are at the hotel. Sleep sound, and don't dream of Signor Zicci."

CHAPTER II.

Clarence Glyndon was a young man of small but independent fortune. He had, early in life, evinced considerable promise in the art of painting; and, rather from enthusiasm than the want of a profession, he had resolved to devote himself to a career which in England has been seldom entered upon by persons who can live on their own means. Without being a poet, Glyndon had also manifested a graceful faculty for verse, which had contributed to win

his entry into society above his birth. Spoiled and flattered from his youth upward, his natural talents were in some measure relaxed by indolence, and that worldly and selfish habit of thought which frivolous companionship often engenders, and which is withering alike to stern virtue and high genius. The luxuriance of his fancy was unabated; but the affections which are the life of fancy had grown languid and inactive: his youth, his vanity, and a restless daring and thirst of adventure had from time to time involved him in dangers and dilemmas, out of which, of late, he had always extricated himself with the ingenious felicity of a clever head and cold heart. He had left England for Rome with the avowed purpose and sincere resolution of studying the divine masterpieces of art; but pleasure had soon allured him from ambition, and he quitted the gloomy palaces of Rome for the gay shores and animated revelries of Naples. Here he had fallen in love—deeply in love, as he said and thought—with a young person celebrated at Naples—Isabel di Pisani. She was the only daughter of an Italian, by an English mother: the father had known better days; in his prosperity he had travelled, and won in England the affections of a lady of some fortune. He had been induced to speculate; he lost his all; he settled at Naples, and taught languages and music. His wife died when Isabel, christened from her mother, was ten years old. At sixteen she came out on the stage; two years afterwards her father departed this life, and Isabel was an orphan.

Glyndon, a man of pleasure, and a regular attendant at the theatre, had remarked the young actress behind the scenes; he fell in love with her, and he told her so. The girl listened to him perhaps from vanity, perhaps from ambition, perhaps from coquetry;—she listened, and allowed but few stolen interviews, in which she permitted no favour to the Englishman; it was one reason why he loved her so much.

The day following that on which our story opens, Glyn-

don was riding alone by the shores of the Neapolitan sea, on the other side of the Cavern of Pausilippo. It was past noon; the sun had lost its early fervour, and a cool-breeze sprang voluptuously from the sparkling sea. Bending over a fragment of stone near the roadside he perceived the form of a man; and when he approached he recognised Zicci.

The Englishman saluted him courteously. "Have you discovered some antique?" said he, with a smile; "they are as common as pebbles on this road."

"No," replied Zicci; "it was but one of those antiques that have their date, indeed, from the beginning of the world, but which Nature eternally withers and renews." So saying, he showed Glyndon a small herb, with a pale blue flower, and then placed it carefully in his bosom.

"You are a herbalist?"

"I am."

"It is, I am told, a study full of interest."

"To those who understand it, doubtless. But," continued Zicci, looking up with a slight and cold smile, "why do you linger on your way to converse with me on matters in which you neither have knowledge nor desire to obtain it? I read your heart, young Englishman; your curiosity is excited; you wish to know *me*, and not this humble herb. Pass on; your desire never can be satisfied."

"You have not the politeness of your countrymen," said Glyndon, somewhat discomposed. "Suppose I were desirous to cultivate your acquaintance, why should you reject my advances?"

"I reject no man's advances," answered Zicci; "I must know them if they so desire; but *me*, in return, they can never comprehend. If you ask my acquaintance, it is yours; but I would warn you to shun me."

"And why are you then so dangerous?"

"Some have found me so: if I were to predict your fortune by the vain calculations of the astrologer, I should tell you in their despicable jargon that my planet sat darkly in

your house of life. Cross me not if you can avoid it. I warn you now for the first time and last."

"You despise the astrologers, yet you utter a jargon as mysterious as theirs. I neither gamble nor quarrel; why then should I fear you?"

"As you will; I have done."

"Let me speak frankly; your conversation last night interested and amused me."

"I know it; minds like yours are attracted by mystery." Glyndon was piqued at those words, though in the tone in which they were spoken there was no contempt.

"I see you do not consider me worthy of your friendship;—be it so. Good day." Zicci coldly replied to the salutation; and, as the Englishman rode on, returned to his botanical employment.

The same night, Glyndon went, as usual, to the theatre. He was standing behind the scenes watching Isabel, who was on the stage in one of her most brilliant parts. The house resounded with applause. Glyndon was transported with a young man's passion and a young man's pride: "This glorious creature," thought he, "may yet be mine."

He felt, while thus wrapt in delicious reverie, a slight touch upon his shoulder; he turned, and beheld Zicci. "You are in danger," said the latter. "Do not walk home to-night; or if you do, go not alone."

Before Glyndon recovered from his surprise, Zicci disappeared; and when the Englishman saw him again, he was in the box of one of the Neapolitan ministers, where Glyndon could not follow him.

Isabel now left the stage, and Glyndon accosted her with impassioned gallantry. The actress was surprisingly beautiful: of fair complexion, and golden hair, her countenance was relieved from the tame and gentle loveliness which the Italians suppose to be the characteristics of English beauty, by the contrast of dark eyes and lashes, by a forehead of great height, to which the dark outline of the eyebrows gave something of majesty and command. In spite of the

slightness of virgin youth, her proportions had the nobleness, blent with the delicacy, that belongs to the masterpieces of ancient sculpture; and there was a conscious pride in her step, and in the swanlike bend of her stately head, as she turned with an evident impatience from the address of her lover. Taking aside an old woman, who was her constant and confidential attendant at the theatre, she said in an earnest whisper:

"Oh, Gionetta! he is here again! I have seen him again!—and again, he alone of the whole theatre withholds from me his applause. He scarcely seems to notice me; his indifference mortifies me to the soul;—I could weep for rage and sorrow."

"Which is he, my darling?" said the old woman with fondness in her voice. "He must be dull—not worth thy thoughts."

The actress drew Gionetta nearer to the stage, and pointed out to her a man in one of the nearer boxes conspicuous amongst all else by the simplicity of his dress, and the extraordinary beauty of his features.

"Not worth a thought, Gionetta!" repeated Isabel—"not worth a thought! Saw you ever one so noble, so godlike?"

"By the Holy Mother!" answered Gionetta, "he is a proper man, and has the air of a prince."

The prompter summoned the Signora Pisani. "Find out his name, Gionetta," said she, sweeping on to the stage, and passing by Glyndon, who gazed at her with a look of sorrowful reproach.

The scene on which the actress now entered was that of the final catastrophe, wherein all her remarkable powers of voice and art were pre-eminently called forth. The house hung on every word with breathless worship; but the eyes of Isabel sought only those of one calm and unmoved spectator; she exerted herself as if inspired. The stranger listened, and observed her with an attentive gaze, but no approval escaped his lips; no emotion changed the expression of his cold and half-disdainful aspect. Isabel, who

was in the character of a jealous and abandoned mistress, never felt so acutely the part she played. Her tears were truthful;—her passion that of nature: it was almost too terrible to behold. She was borne from the stage exhausted and insensible, amidst such a tempest of admiring rapture, as Continental audiences alone can raise. The crowd stood up—handkerchiefs waved—garlands and flowers were thrown on the stage—men wiped their eyes, and women sobbed aloud.

"By heavens!" said a Neapolitan of great rank, "she has fired me beyond endurance. To-night, this very night, she shall be mine! You have arranged all, Mascari?"

"All, signor. And if this young Englishman should accompany her home?"

"The presuming barbarian! At all events, let him bleed for his folly. I hear that she admits him to secret interviews. I will have no rival."

"But an Englishman! There is always a search after the bodies of the English."

"Fool! is not the sea deep enough, or the earth secret enough, to hide one dead man? Our ruffians are silent as the grave itself:—and I—who would dare to suspect, to arraign the Prince di ——? See to it—let him be watched, and the fitting occasion taken. I trust him to you:—robbers murder him;—you understand;—the country swarms with them;—plunder and strip him. Take three men; the rest shall be my escort."

Mascari shrugged his shoulders, and bowed submissively.

Meanwhile Glyndon besought Isabel, who recovered but slowly, to return home in his carriage.[1] She had done so once or twice before, though she had never permitted him to accompany her. This time she refused, and with some petulance. Glyndon, offended, was retiring sullenly, when Gionetta stopped him. "Stay, signor," said she, coaxing-

[1] At that time in Naples, carriages were both cheaper to hire, and more necessary for strangers, than they are now.

ly; "the dear signora is not well—do not be angry with her; I will make her accept your offer."

Glyndon stayed, and after a few moments spent in expostulation on the part of Gionetta and resistance on that of Isabel, the offer was accepted: the actress, with a mixture of *naïveté* and coquetry, gave her hand to her lover, who kissed it with delight. Gionetta and her charge entered the carriage, and Glyndon was left at the door of the theatre, to return home on foot. The mysterious warning of Zicci then suddenly occurred to him; he had forgotten it in the interest of this lover's quarrel with Isabel. He thought it now advisable to guard against danger foretold by lips so mysterious; he looked round for some one he knew; the theatre was disgorging its crowds, who hustled and jostled and pressed upon him; but he recognised no familiar countenances. While pausing irresolute he heard Merton's voice calling on him, and, to his great relief, discovered his friend making his way through the throng.

"I have secured you a place in the Count Cetoxa's carriage," said he. "Come along, he is waiting for us."

"How kind in you! how did you find me out?"

"I met Zicci in the passage. 'Your friend is at the door of the theatre,' said he; 'do not let him go home alone tonight: the streets of Naples are not always safe.' I immediately remembered that some of the Calabrian bravos had been busy within the city the last few weeks, and asked Cetoxa, who was with me, to accompany you."

Further explanation was forbidden, for they now joined the Count. As Glyndon entered the carriage and drew up the glass, he saw four men standing apart by the pavement, who seemed to eye him with attention.

"*Cospetto!*" cried one—"*ecco Inglese!*" Glyndon imperfectly heard the exclamation as the carriage drove on. He reached home in safety.

"Have you discovered who he is?" asked the actress, as she was now alone in the carriage with Gionetta.

"Yes, he is the celebrated Signor Zicci, about whom the

Court has run mad. They say he is so rich!—oh, so much richer than any of the Inglese! But a bird in the hand, my angel, is better than——"

"Cease," interrupted the young actress. "Zicci: speak of the Englishman no more."

The carriage was now entering that more lonely and remote part of the city in which Isabel's house was situated, when it suddenly stopped.

Gionetta, in alarm, thrust her head out of window, and perceived by the pale light of the moon that the driver, torn from his seat, was already pinioned in the arms of two men; the next moment the door was opened violently, and a tall figure, masked and mantled, appeared.

"Fear not, fairest Pisani," said he, gently, "no ill shall befall you." As he spoke, he wound his arms round the form of the fair actress, and endeavoured to lift her from the carriage. But the Signora Pisani was not an ordinary person; she had been before exposed to all the dangers to which the beauty of the low-born was subjected amongst a lawless and profligate nobility; she thrust back the assailant with a power that surprised him, and in the next moment the blade of a dagger gleamed before his eyes. "Touch me," said she, drawing herself to the farther end of the carriage, "and I strike!"

The mask drew back.

"By the body of Bacchus, a bold spirit!" said he, half laughing and half alarmed. "Here, Luigi—Giovanni! disarm and seize her.—Harm her not."

The mask retired from the door, and another and yet taller form presented itself. "Be calm, Isabel di Pisani," said he in a low voice; "with me you are indeed safe!" He lifted his mask as he spoke, and showed the noble features of Zicci. "Be calm, be hushed,—I can save you." He vanished, leaving Isabel lost in surprise, agitation, and delight. There were in all nine masks: two were engaged with the driver; one stood at the head of the carriage horses; a third guarded the well-trained steeds of the

party; three others, besides Zicci, and the one who had first accosted Isabel, stood apart by a carriage drawn to the side of the road. To these Zicci motioned. they advanced; he pointed towards the first mask, who was in fact the Prince di ——, and, to his unspeakable astonishment, the Prince was suddenly seized from behind.

"Treason!" he cried. "Treason among my own men! What means this?"

"Place him in his carriage! If he resist, shoot him!" said Zicci calmly.

He approached the men who had detained the coachman.

"You are outnumbered and outwitted," said he: "join your lord; you are three men—we six, armed to the teeth. Thank our mercy that we spare your lives;—go!"

The men gave way, dismayed. The driver remounted.

"Cut the traces of their carriage and the bridles of their horses," said Zicci, as he entered the vehicle containing Isabel, and which now drove on rapidly, leaving the discomfited ravisher in a state of rage and stupor impossible to describe.

"Allow me to explain this mystery to you," said Zicci. "I discovered the plot against you—no matter how. I frustrated it thus: The head of this design is a nobleman,—who has long persecuted you in vain. He and two of his creatures watched you from the entrance of the theatre, having directed six others to await him on the spot where you were attacked; myself and five of my servants supplied their place, and were mistaken for his own followers. I had previously ridden alone to the spot where the men were waiting and informed them that their master would not require their services that night. They believed me—for I showed them his signet ring—and accordingly dispersed. I then joined my own band, whom I had left in the rear; you know all. We are at your door."

CHAPTER III.

Zicci was left alone with the young Italian; she had thrown aside her cloak and headgear; her hair, somewhat dishevelled, fell down her ivory neck, which the dress partially displayed; she seemed, as she sate in that low and humble chamber, a very vision of light and glory.

Zicci gazed at her with an admiration mingled with compassion; he muttered a few words to himself and then addressed her aloud:

"Isabel di Pisani, I have saved you from a great peril; not from dishonour only; but, perhaps, from death. The Prince di ——, under the weak government of a royal child and a venal administration, is a man above the law. He is capable of every crime; but amongst his passions he has such prudence as belongs to ambition; if you were not to reconcile yourself to your shame you would never enter the world again to tell your tale. The ravisher has no heart for repentance, but he has a hand that can murder. I have saved thee, Isabel di Pisani. Perhaps you would ask me wherefore?" Zicci paused and smiled mournfully, as he added: "My life is not that of others, but I am still human; I know pity, and more, Isabel, I can feel gratitude for affection. You love me; it was my fate to fascinate your eye, to arouse your vanity, to inflame your imagination. It was to warn you from this folly that I consented for a few minutes to become your guest. The Englishman, Glyndon, loves thee well—better than I can ever love; he may wed thee—he may bear thee to his own free and happy land, the land of thy mother's kin. Forget me, teach thyself to return and to deserve his love; and I tell thee that thou wilt be honoured and be happy."

Isabel listened with silent wonder and deep blushes to this strange address; and when the voice ceased, she covered her face with her hands and wept.

Zicci rose: "I have fulfilled my duty to you, and I depart. Remember that you are still in danger from the Prince; be wary, and be cautious. Your best precaution is in flight; farewell."

"Oh, do not leave me yet; you have read a secret of which I myself was scarcely conscious; you despise me—you, my preserver! Ah, do not misjudge me; I am better, higher than I seem. Since I saw thee I have been a new being." The poor girl clasped her hands passionately as she spoke, and her tears streamed down her cheeks.

"What would you that I should answer?" said Zicci, pausing, but with a cold severity in his eye.

"Say that you do not despise—say that you do not think me light and shameless."

"Willingly, Isabel; I know your heart and your history: you are capable of great virtues; you have the seeds of a rare and powerful genius. You may pass through the brief period of your human life with a proud step and a cheerful heart, if you listen to my advice. You have been neglected from your childhood; you have been thrown among nations at once frivolous and coarse, your nobler dispositions, your higher qualities, are not developed. You were pleased with the admiration of Glyndon; you thought that the passionate stranger might marry you, while others had only uttered the vows that dishonour. Poor child, it was the instinctive desire of right within thee that made thee listen to him; and if my fatal shadow had not crossed thy path, thou wouldst have loved him well enough, at least for content. Return to that hope, and nurse again that innocent affection; this is my answer to thee. Art thou contented?"

"No! ah, no! severe as thou art, I love better to hear thee than, than—what am I saying? And now you have saved me, I shall pray for you, bless you, think of you; and am I never to see you more? Alas, the moment you leave me, danger and dread will darken round me. Let me be your servant, your slave; with you I should have no fear."

A dark shade fell over Zicci's brow; he looked from the ground, on which his eyes had rested while she spoke, upon the earnest and imploring face of the beautiful creature that now knelt before him, with all the passions of an ardent and pure, but wholly untutored and half-savage nature, speaking from the tearful eyes and trembling lips. He looked at her with an aspect she could not interpret; in his eyes were kindness, sorrow, and even something, she thought, of love; yet the brow frowned, and the lip was stern.

"It is in vain that we struggle with our doom," said he, calmly; "listen to me yet. I am a man, Isabel, in whom there are some good impulses yet left, but whose life is, on the whole, devoted to a systematic and selfish desire to enjoy whatever life can afford. To me it is given to warn; the warning neglected, I interfere no more; I leave her victories to that Fate that I cannot baffle of her prey. You do not understand me; no matter: what I am now about to say will be more easy to comprehend. I tell thee to tear from thy heart all thought of me; thou hast yet the power. If thou wilt not obey me, thou must reap the seeds that thou wilt sow. Glyndon, if thou acceptest his homage, will love thee throughout life; I, too, can love thee."

"You,—you——"

"But with a lukewarm and selfish love; and one that cannot last. Thou wilt be a flower in my path:—I inhale thy sweetness, and pass on—caring not what wind shall sup thee, or what step shall tread thee to the dust. Which is the love thou wouldst prefer?"

"But do you—can you love me!—you—you, Zicci, even for an hour? say it again."

"Yes, Isabel;—I am not dead to beauty; and yours is that rarely given to the daughters of men. Yes, Isabel, I could love thee."

Isabel uttered a cry of joy, seized his hand, and kissed it through burning and impassioned tears. Zicci raised her in his arms, and imprinted one kiss upon her forehead.

"Do not deceive thyself," he said; "consider well. I

tell thee again, that my love is subjected to the certain curse of change. For my part, I shall seek thee no more. Thy fate shall be thine own and not mine. For the rest, fear not the Prince di ——. At *present*, I can save thee from every harm."

With these words he withdrew himself from her embrace, and had gained the outer door just as Gionetta came from the kitchen with her hands full of such cheer as she had managed to collect together. Zicci laid his hand on the old woman's arm.

"Signor Glyndon," said he, "loves Isabel; he may wed her. You love your mistress; plead for him. Disabuse her, if you can, of any caprice for me. I am a bird ever on the wing."

He dropped a purse, heavy with gold, into Gionetta's bosom—and was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

The palace of Zicci was among the noblest in Naples. It still stands, though ruined and dismantled, in one of those antique streets, from which the old races of the Norman and the Spaniard have long since vanished.

He ascended the vast staircase, and entered the rooms reserved for his private hours. They were nowise remarkable except for their luxury and splendour, and the absence of what men, so learned as Zicci was reputed, generally prize, viz., books. Zicci seemed to know everything that books can teach; yet of books themselves he spoke and thought with the most profound contempt.

He threw himself on a sofa, and dismissed his attendants for the night; and here it may be observed, that Zicci had no one servant who knew anything of his origin, birth, or history. Some of his attendants he had brought with him from other cities; the rest he had engaged at Naples.

He hired those, only, whom wealth can make subservient. His expenditure was most lavish; his generosity, regal; but his orders were ever given as those of a general to his army. The least disobedience, the least hesitation, and the offender was at once dismissed. He was a man who sought tools, and never made confidants.

Zicci remained for a considerable time motionless and thoughtful. The hand of the clock before him pointed to the first hour of morning. The solemn voice of the time-piece aroused him from his reverie:

"One sand more out of the mighty hour-glass," said he, rising; "one hour nearer to the last! I am weary of humanity. I will enter into one of the countless worlds around me." He lifted the arras that clothed the walls, and touching a strong iron door (then made visible) with a minute key which he wore in a ring, passed into an inner apartment lighted by a single lamp of extraordinary lustre. The room was small; a few phials and some dried herbs were ranged in shelves on the wall, which was hung with snow-white cloth of coarse texture. From the shelves Zicci selected one of the phials, and poured the contents into a crystal cup. The liquid was colourless, and sparkled rapidly up in bubbles of light; it almost seemed to evaporate ere it reached his lips; but when the strange beverage was quaffed, a sudden change was visible in the countenance of Zicci: his beauty became yet more dazzling, his eyes shone with intense fire, and his form seemed to grow more youthful and ethereal.

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CHAPTER V.

The next day Glyndon bent his steps towards Zicci's palace. The young man's imagination, naturally inflammable, was singularly excited by the little he had seen and

heard of this strange being—a spell, he could neither master nor account for, attracted him towards the stranger. Zicci's power seemed mysterious and great—his motives kindly and benevolent, yet his manners chilling and repellant. Why at one moment reject Glyndon's acquaintance, at another save him from danger? How had Zicci thus acquired the knowledge of enemies unknown to Glyndon himself? His interest was deeply roused, his gratitude appealed to; he resolved to make another effort to conciliate Zicci.

The signor was at home, and Glyndon was admitted into a lofty saloon, where in a few moments Zicci joined him.

"I am come to thank you for your warning last night," said he; "and to entreat you to complete my obligation by informing me of the quarter to which I may look for enmity and peril."

"You are a gallant, Mr. Glyndon," said Zicci, with a smile; "and do not know so little of the south as not to be aware that gallants have always rivals."

"Are you serious?" said Glyndon, colouring.

"Most serious. You love Isabel di Pisani; you have for rival one of the most powerful and relentless of the Neapolitan princes. Your danger is indeed great."

"But, pardon me—how came it known to you?"

"I give no account of myself to mortal man," replied Zicci, haughtily; "and to me it matters not whether you regard or scorn my warning."

"Well, if I may not question you, be it so;—but at least advise me what to do."

"You will not follow my advice."

"You wrong me! why?"

"Because you are constitutionally brave; you are fond of excitement and mystery; you like to be the hero of a romance. I should advise you to leave Naples; and you will disdain to do so while Naples contains a foe to shun, or a mistress to pursue."

"You are right," said the young Englishman, with

energy; "and you cannot reproach me for such a resolution."

"No, there is another course left to you; do you love Isabel di Pisani truly and fervently? if so, marry her, and take a bride to your native land."

"Nay," answered Glyndon, embarrassed; "Isabel is not of my rank; her character is strange and self-willed; her education neglected. I am enslaved by her beauty, but I cannot wed her."

Zicci frowned.

"Your love then is but selfish lust, and by that love you will be betrayed. Young man, Destiny is less inexorable than it appears. The resources of the great Ruler of the Universe are not so scanty and so stern as to deny to men the divine privilege of Free Will; all of us can carve out our own way, and God can make our very contradictions harmonise with His solemn ends. You have before you an option. Honourable and generous love may even now work out your happiness, and effect your escape; a frantic and interested passion will but lead you to misery and doom."

"Do you pretend, then, to read the Future?"

"I have said all that it pleases me to utter."

"While you assume the moralist to me, Signor Zicci," said Glyndon, with a smile, "if report says true, you do not yourself reject the allurements of unfettered love."

"If it were necessary that practice square with precept," said Zicci, with a sneer, "our pulpits would be empty. Do you think it matters, in the great aggregate of human destinies, what one man's *conduct* may be? Nothing; not a grain of dust: but it matters much what are the *sentiments* he propagates. His acts are limited and momentary; his sentiments may pervade the universe, and inspire generations till the day of doom. All our virtues, all our laws, are drawn from books and maxims, which *are* sentiments, not from deeds. Our opinions, young Englishman, are the angel part of us; our acts the earthly."

"You have reflected deeply for an Italian," said Glyndon.

"Who told you I was an Italian?"

"Are you not of Corsica?"

"Tush," said Zicci, impatiently turning away. Then, after a pause, he resumed, in a mild voice—"Glyndon, do you renounce Isabel di Pisani? Will you take three days to consider of what I have said?"

"Renounce her—never!"

"Then you will marry her?"

"Impossible."

"Be it so: she will then renounce you.—I tell you that you have rivals."

"Yes; the Prince di ——; but I do not fear him."

"You have another, whom you will fear more."

"And who is he?"

"Myself."

Glyndon turned pale and started from his seat.

"You, Signor Zicci!—you—and you dare to tell me so?"

"Dare! Alas! you know there is nothing on earth left me to fear!"

These words were not uttered arrogantly, but in a tone of the most mournful dejection. Glyndon was enraged, confounded, and yet awed. However, he had a brave English heart within his breast, and he recovered himself quickly.

"Signor," said he, calmly, "I am not to be duped by these solemn phrases, and these mystical sympathies. You may have power which I cannot comprehend or emulate, or you may be but a keen impostor."

"Well, sir, your logical position is not ill-taken—proceed."

"I mean then," continued Glyndon, resolutely, though somewhat disconcerted, "I mean you to understand, that, though I am not to be persuaded or compelled by a stranger to marry Isabel di Pisani, I am not the less determined never tamely to yield her to another."

Zicci looked gravely at the young man, whose sparkling eyes and heightened colour testified the spirit to support his

words, and replied: "So bold! well; it becomes you. You have courage, then—I thought it. Perhaps it may be put to a sharper test than you dream of. But take my advice: wait three days, and tell me then if you will marry this young person."

"But if you love her, why—why——"

"Why am I anxious that she should wed another: to save her from myself! Listen to me. That girl, humble and uneducated though she be, has in her the seeds of the most lofty qualities and virtues. She can be all to the man she loves—all that man can desire in wife or mistress. Her soul, developed by affection, will elevate your own: it will influence your fortunes, exalt your destiny: you will become a great and prosperous man. If, on the contrary, she fall to me, I know not what may be her lot; but I know that few can pass the ordeal, and hitherto no woman has survived the struggle."

As Zicci spoke his face became livid, and there was something in his voice that froze the warm blood of his listener.

"What is this mystery which surrounds you?" exclaimed Glyndon, unable to repress his emotion. "Are you, in truth, different from other men? Have you passed the boundary of lawful knowledge? Are you, as some declare, a sorcerer, only a——"

"Hush!" interrupted Zicci, gently, and with a smile of singular but melancholy sweetness: "have you earned the right to ask me these questions? The days of torture and persecution are over; and a man may live as he pleases, and talk as it suits him, without fear of the stake and the rack. Since I can defy persecution, pardon me if I do not succumb to curiosity."

Glyndon blushed, and rose. In spite of his love for Isabel, and his natural terror of such a rival, he felt himself irresistibly drawn towards the very man he had most cause to suspect and dread. It was like the fascination of the basilisk. He held out his hand to Zicci, saying,

"Well, then, if we are to be rivals, our swords must settle our rights: till then I would fain be friends."

"Friends! Pardon me: I like you too well to give you my friendship. You know not what you ask."

"Enigmas again!"

"Enigmas!" cried Zicci, passionately, "ay: can you dare to solve them? Would you brave all that human heart can conceive of peril and of horror, so that you at last might stand separated from this visible universe side by side with me? When you can dare this, and when you are fit to dare it, I may give you my right hand, and call you friend."

"I could dare everything and all things for the attainment of superhuman wisdom," said Glyndon; and his countenance was lighted up with wild and intense enthusiasm.

Zicci observed him in thoughtful silence.

"He may be worthy," he muttered; "he may—yet—" He broke off abruptly; then, speaking aloud: "Go, Glyndon," said he: "in three days we shall meet again."

"Where?"

"Perhaps where you can least anticipate. In any case, we shall meet."

CHAPTER VI.

Glyndon thought seriously and deeply over all that the mysterious Zicci had said to him relative to Isabel. His imagination was inflamed by the vague and splendid promises that were connected with his marriage with the poor actress. His fears, too, were naturally aroused by the threat that by marriage alone could he save himself from the rivalry of Zicci—Zicci, born to dazzle and command—Zicci, who united to the apparent wealth of a monarch the beauty of a god—Zicci, whose eye seemed to

foresee whose hand to frustrate, every danger. What a rival! and what a foe!

But Glyndon's pride, as well as jealousy, was aroused. He was *brave comme son epée.* Should he shrink from the power or the enmity of a man mortal as himself? And why should Zicci desire him to give his name and station to one of a calling so equivocal? Might there not be motives he could not fathom? Might not the actress and the Corsican be in league with each other? Might not all this jargon of prophecy and menace be but artifices to dupe him?—the tool, perhaps, of a mountebank and his mistress! Mistress! ah no. If ever maidenhood wrote its modest characters externally—that pure eye—that noble forehead—that mien and manner, so ingenuous even in their coquetry, their pride—assured him that Isabel was not the base and guilty thing he had dared for a moment to suspect her. Lost in a labyrinth of doubts and surmises, Glyndon turned on the practical sense of the sober Merton to assist and enlighten him.

As may be well supposed, his friend listened to his account of his interview with Zicci with a half-suppressd and ironical smile.

"Excellent, my dear friend. This Zicci is another Apollonius of Tyana—nothing less will satisfy you. What! is it possible that you are the Clarence Glyndon of whose career such glowing hopes are entertained? You the man whose genius has been extolled by all the greybeards? Not a boy turned out from a village school but would laugh you to scorn. And so because Signor Zicci tells you that you will be a marvellously great man if you revolt all your friends, and blight all your prospects, by marrying a Neapolitan actress, you begin already to think of— By Jupiter! I cannot talk patiently on the subject. Let the girl alone; that would be the proper plan; or else——"

"You talk very sensibly," interrupted Glyndon, "but you distract me. I will go to Isabel's house—I will see her—I will judge for myself."

"That is certainly the best way to forget her," said Merton.

Glyndon seized his hat and sword, and was gone.

CHAPTER VII.

She was seated outside her door—the young actress. The sea, which in that heavenly bay literally seems to sleep in the arms of the shore, bounded the view in front; while to the right, not far off, rose the dark and tangled crags to which the traveller of to-day is daily brought to gaze on the tomb of Virgil, or compare with the Cavern of Pausilippo the archway of Highgate-hill. There were a few fishermen loitering by the cliffs, on which their nets were hung up to dry; and, at a distance, the sound of some rustic pipe (more common at that day than in this), mingled now and then with the bells of the lazy mules, broke the voluptuous silence—the silence of declining noon on the shores of Naples. Never till you have enjoyed it, never till you have felt its enervating but delicious charm, believe that you can comprehend all the meaning of the *dolce far niente;*—and when that luxury has been known, when you have breathed the atmosphere of faëry land, then you will no longer wonder why the heart ripens with so sudden and wild a power beneath the rosy skies and amidst the glorious foliage of the south.

The young actress was seated by the door of her house; overhead a rude canvas awning sheltered her from the sun; on her lap lay the manuscript of a new part in which she was shortly to appear. By her side was the guitar on which she had been practising the airs that were to ravish the ears of the cognoscenti. But the guitar had been thrown aside in despair—her voice this morning did not obey her will. The manuscript lay unheeded, and the eyes of the actress were fixed on the broad, blue deep beyond.

In the unwonted negligence of her dress might be traced the abstraction of her mind. Her beautiful hair was gathered up loosely, and partially bandaged by a kerchief, whose purple colour seemed to deepen the golden hue of the tresses. A stray curl escaped, and fell down the graceful neck. A loose morning robe, girded by a sash, left the breeze that came ever and anon from the sea to die upon the bust half disclosed, and the tiny slipper, that Cinderella might have worn, seemed a world too wide for the tiny foot which it scarcely covered. It might be the heat of the day that deepened the soft bloom of the cheeks, and gave an unwonted languor to the large dark eyes. In all the pomp of her stage attire—in all the flush of excitement before the intoxicating lamps—never had Isabel looked so lovely.

By the side of the actress, and filling up the threshold, stood Gionetta, with her hands thrust up to the elbow in two huge recesses on either side her gown—pockets, indeed, they might be called by courtesy—such pockets as Beezlebub's grandmother might have shaped for herself, bottomless pits in miniature.

"But I assure you," said the nurse, in that sharp, quick, ear-splitting tone in which the old women of the south are more than a match for those of the north, "but I assure you, my darling, that there is not a finer cavalier in all Naples, nor a more beautiful, than this *Inglese*—and I am told that all the *Inglesi* are much richer than they seem. Though they have no trees in their country, poor people, and instead of twenty-four they have only twelve hours to the day, yet I hear, *cospetto!* that they shoe their horses with *scudi;* and since they cannot (the poor heretics!) turn grapes into wine, for they have no grapes, they turn gold into physic, and take a glass or two of *pistoles* whenever they are troubled with the colic. But you don't hear me. Little pupil of my eyes, you don't hear me!"

"Gionetta, is he not god-like?"

"*Sancta Maria!* he is handsome, *bellissimo;* and when

you are his wife—for they say these English are never satisfied unless they marry——"

"Wife!—English!—whom are you talking of?"

"Why, the young English signor, to be sure."

"Chut! I thought you spoke of Zicci."

"O! Signor Zicci is very rich and very generous; but he wants to be your cavalier, not your husband. I see that—leave me alone. When you are married, then you will see how amiable Signor Zicci will be. Oh, *per fede*, but he will be as close to your husband as the yolk to the white—that he will."

"Silence, Gionetta! How wretched I am to have no one else to speak to—to advise me. Oh, beautiful sun!" and the girl pressed her hand to her heart with wild energy, "why do you light every spot but *this?* Dark—dark. And a little while ago I was so calm, so innocent, so gay. I did not hate you then, Gionetta, hateful as your talk was—I hate you now. Go in—leave me alone—leave me."

"And indeed it is time I should leave you, for the *polenta* will be spoiled, and you have eat nothing all day. If you don't eat you will lose your beauty, my darling, and then nobody will care for you. Nobody cares for us when we grow ugly—I know that—and then you must, like old Gionetta, get some Isabel of your own to spoil. I'll go and see to the *polenta*."

"Since I have known this man," said the actress, half aloud, "since his dark eyes have fascinated me, I am no longer the same. I long to escape from myself—to glide with the sunbeam over the hill-tops—to become something that is not of earth. Is it, indeed, that he is a sorcerer, as I have heard? Phantoms float before me at night, and a fluttering like the wing of a bird within my heart seems as if the spirit were terrified, and would break its cage."

While murmuring these incoherent rhapsodies, a step that she did not hear approached the actress, and a light hand touched her arm.

"Isabella! *carissima!* Isabella!"

She turned and saw Glyndon. The sight of his fair young face calmed her at once. She did not love him, yet his sight gave her pleasure. She had for him a kind and grateful feeling. Ah, if she had never beheld Zicci!

"Isabel," said the Englishman, drawing her again to the bench from which she had risen, and seating himself beside her. "You know how passionately I love thee. Hitherto thou hast played with my impatience and my ardour; thou hast sometimes smiled, sometimes frowned away my importunities for a reply to my suit; but this day—I know not how it is—I feel a more sustained and settled courage to address thee, and learn the happiest or the worst. I have rivals, I know, rivals who are more powerful than the poor artist. Are they also more favoured?"

Isabel blushed faintly, but her countenance was grave and distressed. Looking down, and marking some hieroglyphical figures in the dust with the point of her slipper, she said, with some hesitation and a vain attempt to be gay, "Signor, whoever wastes his thoughts on an actress must submit to have rivals. It is our unhappy destiny not to be sacred even to ourselves."

"But you have told me, Isabel, that you do not love this destiny, glittering though it seem—that your heart is not in the vocation which your talents adorn."

"Ah no," said the actress, her eyes filling with tears, "it is a miserable lot to be slave to a multitude."

"Fly then with me," said the artist passionately. "Quit for ever the calling that divides that heart I would have all my own. Share my fate now and for ever—my pride, my delight, my ideal! Thou shalt inspire my canvas and my song, thy beauty shall be made at once holy and renowned. In the galleries of princes crowds shall gather round the effigy of a Venus or a saint, and a whisper shall break forth, 'It is Isabel di Pisani!' Ah! Isabel, I adore thee; tell me that I do not worship in vain."

"Thou art good and fair," said Isabel, gazing on her lover as he pressed his cheek nearer to hers, and clasped her hand in his. "But what should I give thee in return?"

"Love—love—only love!"

"A sister's love?"

"Ah, speak not with such cruel coldness!"

"It is all I have for thee. Listen to me, signor: When I look on your face, when I hear your voice, a certain serene and tranquil calm creeps over and lulls thoughts—oh, how feverish, how wild! When thou art gone the day seems a shade more dark; but the shadow soon flies. I miss thee not; I think not of thee; no, I love thee not; and I will give myself only where I love."

"But I would teach thee to love me—fear it not. Nay, such love as thou now describest in our tranquil climates is the love of innocence and youth."

"And it is the innocence he would destroy," said Isabel, rather to herself than to him.

Glyndon drew back conscience-stricken.

"No, it may not be!" she said, rising, and extricating her hand gently from his grasp. "Leave me and forget me. You do not understand, you could not comprehend, the nature of her whom you think to love. From my childhood upward, I have felt as if I were marked out for some strange and preternatural doom; as if I were singled from my kind: this feeling (and oh! at times it is one of delirious and vague delight, at others of the darkest gloom) deepens with me day by day. It is like the shadow of twilight, spreading slowly and solemnly round. My hour approaches; a little while, and it will be night!"

As she spoke, Glyndon listened with visible emotion and perturbation. "Isabel!" he exclaimed, as she ceased, "your words more than ever enchain me to you. As you feel, I feel. I, too, have been ever haunted with a chill and unearthly foreboding. Amidst the crowds of men I have felt alone. In all my pleasures, my toils, my pursuits, a warning voice has murmured in my ear, 'Time has a dark

mystery in store for thy manhood.' When you spoke, it was as the voice of my own soul."

Isabel gazed upon him in wonder and fear. Her countenance was as white as marble: and those features, so divine in their rare symmetry, might have served the Greek with a study for the Pythoness, when, from the mystic cavern and the bubbling spring, she first hears the voice of the inspiring God. Gradually the rigour and tension of that wonderful face relaxed—the colour returned, the pulse beat, the heart animated the frame.

"Tell me," she said, turning partially aside, "tell me, have you seen, do you know, a stranger in this city? one of whom wild stories are afloat."

"You speak of Zicci: I have seen him! I know him! and you? Ah! he, too, would be my rival!—he, too, would bear thee from me!"

"You err," said Isabel, hastily, and with a deep sigh; "he pleads for you: he informed me of your love; he besought me not—not to reject it."

"Strange being! incomprehensible enigma! why did you name him?"

"Why? ah! I would have asked, whether, when you first saw him, the foreboding, the instinct, of which you spoke came on you more fearfully, more intelligibly than before—whether you felt at once repelled from him, yet attracted towards him—whether you felt (and the actress spoke with hurried animation) that with HIM was connected the secret of your life!"

"All this I felt," answered Glyndon, in a trembling voice, "the first time I was in his presence; though all around me was gay;—music, amidst lamp-lit trees. light converse near, and Heaven without a cloud above, my knees knocked together, my hair bristled, and my blood curdled like ice; since then he has divided my thoughts with thee."

"No more, no more," said Isabel, in a stifled tone; "there must be the hand of fate in this; I can speak no more to you now; farewell."

She sprang past him into the house, and closed the door. Glyndon did not dare to follow her, nor, strange as it may seem, was he so inclined. The thought and recollection of that moonlight hour in the gardens,—of the strange address of Zicci, froze up all human passion; Isabel, herself, if not forgotten, shrunk back like a shadow into the recesses of his breast. He shivered as he stepped into the sunlight and musingly retraced his steps into the more populous parts of that liveliest of Italian cities.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was a small cabinet;—the walls were covered with pictures, one of which was worth more than the whole lineage of the owner of the palace. Is not Art a wonderful thing?—a Venetian noble might be a fribble, or an assassin—a scoundrel, or a dolt; worthless, or worse than worthless; yet he might have sate to Titian, and his portrait may be inestimable!—a few inches of painted canvas a thousand times more valuable than a man with his veins and muscle, brain, will, heart, and intellect.

In this cabinet sate a man of about three and forty,—dark-eyed, sallow, with short, prominent features, a massive conformation of jaw, and thick, sensual but resolute lips;—this man was the Prince di ——. His form, middle-sized, but rather inclined to corpulence, was clothed in a loose dressing-robe of rich brocade; on a table before him lay his sword and hat, a mask, dice and dice-box, a portfolio, and an inkstand of silver curiously carved.

"Well, Mascari," said the Prince, looking up towards his parasite, who stood by the embrasure of the deep-set barricaded window, "well, you cannot even guess who this insolent meddler was. A pretty person you to act the part of a Prince's Ruffiano."

"Am I to be blamed for dulness in not being able to con-

jecture who had the courage to thwart the projects of the Prince di ——. As well blame me for not accounting for miracles."

"I will tell thee who it was, most sapient Mascari."

"Who, your Excellency?"

"Zicci."

"Ah! he has the daring of the devil. But why does your Excellency feel so assured; does he court the actress?"

"I know not: but there is a tone in that foreigner's voice that I never can mistake—so clear, and yet so hollow: when I hear it I almost fancy there is such a thing as conscience. However, we must rid ourselves of an impertinent. Mascari, Signor Zicci hath not yet honoured our poor house with his presence. He is a distinguished stranger—we must give a banquet in his honour."

"Ah!—and the cypress wine! The cypress is the proper emblem of the grave."

"But this anon. I am superstitious: there are strange stories of his power and foresight:—remember the Sicilian quackery! But meanwhile the Pisani——"

"Your Excellency is infatuated. The actress has bewitched you."

"Mascari," said the Prince, with a haughty smile, "through these veins rolls the blood of the old Visconti—of those who boasted that no woman ever escaped their lust, and no man their resentment. The crown of my fathers has shrunk into a gewgaw and a toy;—their ambition and their spirit are undecayed. My honour is now enlisted in this pursuit—Isabel must be mine."

"Another ambuscade?" said Mascari, inquiringly.

"Nay, why not enter the house itself: the situation is lonely—and the door is not made of iron."

Before Mascari could reply, the gentleman of the chamber announced the Signor Zicci.

The Prince involuntarily laid his hand on the sword placed on the table—then with a smile at his own impulse,

rose; and met the foreigner at the threshold, with all the profuse and respectful courtesy of Italian simulation.

"This is an honour highly prized," said the Prince; "I have long desired the friendship of one so distinguished——"

"And I have come to give you that friendship," replied Zicci, in a sweet but chilling voice. "To no man yet in Naples have I extended this hand—permit it, Prince, to grasp your own."

The Neapolitan bowed over the hand he pressed; but as he touched it, a shiver came over him, and his heart stood still. Zicci bent on him his dark, smiling eyes, and then seated himself with a familiar air.

"Thus it is signed and sealed—I mean our friendship, noble Prince. And now I will tell you the object of my visit. I find, your Excellency, that, unconsciously perhaps, we are rivals. Can we not accommodate our pretensions? A girl of no moment—an actress;—bah! it is not worth a quarrel. Shall we throw for her? He who casts the lowest shall resign his claim?"

Mascari opened his small eyes to their widest extent; the Prince, no less surprised, but far too well world-read even to show what he felt, laughed aloud.

"And were you, then, the cavalier who spoiled my night's chase, and robbed me of my white doe? By Bacchus, it was prettily done."

"You must forgive me, Prince; I knew not who it was, or my respect would have silenced my gallantry."

"All stratagems fair in love, as in war. Of course you profited by my defeat, and did not content yourself with leaving the little actress at her threshold?"

"She is Diana for me," answered Zicci, lightly; "whoever wins the wreath will not find a flower faded."

"And now you would cast for her—well: but they tell me you are ever a sure player."

"Let Signor Mascari cast for us."

"Be it so. Mascari, the dice."

Surprised and perplexed, the parasite took up the three dice, deposited them gravely in the box, and rattled them noisily, while Zicci threw himself back carelessly in his chair and said, "I give the first chance to your Excellency."

Mascari interchanged a glance with his patron, and threw; the numbers were sixteen.

"It is a high throw," said Zicci, calmly; "nevertheless, Signor Mascari, I do not despond."

Mascari gathered up the dice, shook the box, and rolled the contents once more upon the table; the number was the highest that can be thrown—eighteen.

The Prince darted a glance of fire at his minion, who stood with gaping mouth, staring at the dice, and shaking his head in puzzled wonder.

"I have won, you see," said Zicci; "may we be friends still?"

"Signor," said the Prince, obviously struggling with anger and confusion, "the victory is already yours. But, pardon me, you have spoken lightly of this young girl—will anything tempt you to yield your claim?"

"Ah, do not think so ill of my gallantry."

"Enough," said the Prince, forcing a smile; "I yield. Let me prove that I do not yield ungraciously; will you honour me with your presence at a little feast I propose to give on the Royal birthday?"

"It is indeed a happiness to hear one command of yours which I can obey."

Zicci then turned the conversation, talked lightly and gaily; and soon afterwards departed.

"Villain," then exclaimed the Prince, grasping Mascari by the collar, "you have betrayed me."

"I assure your Excellency that the dice were properly arranged · he should have thrown twelve: but he is the Devil, and that's the end of it."

"There is no time to be lost," said the Prince, quitting hold of his parasite, who quietly resettled his cravat.

"My blood is up—I will win this girl, if I die for it. Who laughed? Mascari, didst *thou* laugh?"

"I, your Excellency—I laugh?"

"It sounded behind me," said the Prince, gazing round.

CHAPTER IX.

It was the day on which Zicci had told Glyndon that he should ask for his decision in respect to Isabel—the third day since their last meeting;—the Englishman could not come to a resolution. Ambition, hitherto the leading passion of his soul, could not yet be silenced by love; and that love, such as it was, unreturned, beset by suspicions and doubts which vanished in the presence of Isabel, and returned when her bright face shone on his eyes no more, for—*les absens ont toujours tort!* Perhaps had he been quite alone, his feelings of honour, of compassion, of virtue, might have triumphed; and he would have resolved either to fly from Isabel, or to offer the love that has no shame. But Merton, cold, cautious, experienced, wary (such a nature has ever power over the imaginative and the impassioned), was at hand to ridicule the impression produced by Zicci, and the notion of delicacy and honour towards an Italian actress. It is true that Merton, who was no profligate, advised him to quit all pursuit of Isabel; but then the advice was precisely of that character which, if it deadens love, stimulates passion. By representing Isabel as one who sought to play a part with him, he excused to Glyndon his own selfishness—he enlisted the Englishman's vanity and pride on the side of his pursuit. Why should he not beat an adventuress at her own weapons?

Glyndon not only felt indisposed on that day to meet Zicci, but he felt also a strong desire to defeat the mysterious prophecy that the meeting should take place. Into this wish Merton readily entered. The young men agreed

to be absent from Naples that day. Early in the morning they mounted their horses, and took the road to Baiæ. Glyndon left word at his hotel, that if Signor Zicci sought him, it was in the neighbourhood of the once celebrated watering-place of the ancients that he should be found.

They passed by Isabel's house, but Glyndon resisted the temptation of pausing there, and threading the grotto of Pausilippo, they wound by a circuitous route back into the suburbs of the city, and took the opposite road which conducts to Portici and Pompeii. It was late at noon when they arrived at the former of these places. Here they halted to dine; for Merton had heard much of the excellence of the macaroni at Portici, and Merton was a *bon vivant.*

They put up at an inn of very humble pretensions, and dined under an awning. Merton was more than usually gay; he pressed the Lacryma upon his friend, and conversed gaily.

"Well, my dear friend, we have foiled Signor Zicci in one of his predictions at least. You will have no faith in him hereafter."

"The Ides are come, not gone."

"Tush! if he is a soothsayer, you are not Cæsar. It is your vanity that makes you credulous: thank heaven, I do not think myself of such importance, that the operations of Nature should be changed in order to frighten me."

"But why should the operations of Nature be changed? there may be a deeper philosophy than we dream of—a philosophy that discovers the secrets of Nature, but does not alter, by penetrating, its courses."

"Ah! you suppose Zicci to be a prophet—a reader of the future; perhaps an associate of Genii and Spirits!"

"I know not what to conjecture; but I see no reason why he should seek, even if an impostor, to impose on me. An impostor must have some motive for deluding us—either ambition or avarice. I am neither rich nor powerful; Zicci spends more in a week than I do in a year. Nay, a Nea-

politan banker told me that the sums invested by Zicci in his hands were enough to purchase half the lands of the Neapolitan noblesse."

"Grant this to be true; do you suppose the love to dazzle and mystify is not as strong with some natures as that of gold and power with others? Zicci has a moral ostentation, and the same character that makes him rival kings in expediture makes him not disdain to be wondered at even by a humble Englishman."

Here the landlord, a little fat oily fellow, came up with a fresh bottle of Lacryma. He hoped their Excellencies were pleased. He was most touched—touched to the heart that they liked the macaroni. Were their Excellencies going to Vesuvius; there was a slight eruption; they could not see it where they were, but it was pretty, and would be prettier still after sunset.

"A capital idea," cried Merton. "What say you, Glyndon?"

"I have not yet seen an eruption; I should like it much."

"But is there no danger?" said the prudent Merton.

"Oh, not at all; the mountain is very civil at present. It only plays a little, just to amuse their Excellencies the English."

"Well, order the horses, and bring the bill; we will go before it is dark. Clarence, my friend—*Nunc est bibendum;* but take care of the *pede libero,* which won't do for walking on lava!"

The bottle was finished, the bill paid, the gentlemen mounted, the landlord bowed, and they bent their way in the cool of the delightful evening towards Resina.

The wine animated Glyndon, whose unequal spirits were, at times, high and brilliant as those of a school-boy released; and the laughter of the northern tourists sounded oft and merrily along the melancholy domains of buried cities.

Hesperus had lighted his lamp amidst the rosy skies as they arrived at Resina. Here they quitted their horses, and took mules and a guide. As the sky grew darker and

more dark, the Mountain Fire burned with an intense lustre. In various streaks and streamlets, the fountain of flame rolled down the dark summit, then undiminished by the eruption of 1822, and the Englishmen began to feel increase upon them, as they ascended, that sensation of solemnity and awe which makes the very atmosphere that surrounds the giant of the Plains of the Antique Hades.

It was night, when, leaving the mules, they ascended on foot, accompanied by their guide and a peasant, who bore a rude torch. The guide was a conversable, garrulous fellow, like most of his country and his calling; and Merton, whose chief characteristics were a sociable temper and a hardy common sense, loved to amuse or to instruct himself on every incidental occasion.

"Ah, Excellency," said the guide, "your countrymen have a strong passion for the volcano. Long life to them; they bring us plenty of money. If our fortunes depended on the Neapolitans, we should starve."

"True, they have no curiosity," said Merton. "Do you remember, Glyndon, the contempt with which that old Count said to us, 'You will go to Vesuvius, I suppose; I have never been: why should I go? You have cold, you have hunger, you have fatigue, you have danger, and all for nothing but to see fire, which just looks as well in a brazier as a mountain.' Ha! ha! the old fellow was right."

"But, Excellency," said the guide, "that is not all: some cavaliers think to ascend the mountain without our help. I am sure they deserve to tumble into the crater."

"They must be bold fellows to go alone; you don't often find such."

"Sometimes among the French, signor. But the other night—I never was so frightened. I had been with an English party; and a lady had left a pocket-book on the mountain, where she had been sketching. She offered me a handsome sum to return for it, and bring it to her at Naples. So I went in the evening,—I found it sure

enough, and was about to return, when I saw a figure that seemed to emerge from the crater itself. The air was so pestiferous, that I could not have conceived a human creature could breathe it and live. I was so astounded that I stood as still as a stone, till the figure came over the hot ashes, and stood before me face to face. Sancta Maria, what a head!"

"What, hideous!"

"No, so beautiful, but so terrible. It had nothing human in its aspect."

"And what said the Salamander?"

"Nothing! It did not even seem to perceive me, though I was as near as I am to you; but its eyes seemed prying into the air. It passed by me quickly, and, walking across a stream of burning lava, soon vanished on the other side of the mountain. I was curious and foolhardy, and resolved to see if I could bear the atmosphere which this visitor had left; but, though I did not advance within thirty yards of the spot at which he had first appeared, I was driven back by a vapour that well-nigh stifled me. *Cospetto*, I have spat blood ever since."

"It must be Zicci," whispered Glyndon.

"I knew you would say so," returned Merton, laughing.

The little party had now arrived nearly at the summit of the mountain; and unspeakably grand was the spectacle on which they gazed. From the crater arose a vapour, intensely dark, that overspread the whole background of the heavens; in the centre whereof rose a flame, that assumed a form singularly beautiful. It might have been compared to a crest of gigantic feathers, the diadem of the mountain, high arched, and drooping downward, with the hues delicately shaded off, and the whole shifting and tremulous as the plumage on a warrior's helm. The glare of the flame spread, luminous and crimson, over the dark and rugged ground on which they stood, and drew an innumerable variety of shadows from crag and hollow. An oppressive and sulphureous exhalation served to increase the gloomy

and sublime terror of the place; but on turning from the mountain, and towards the distant and unseen ocean, the contrast was wonderfully great; the heavens serene and blue, the stars still and calm as the eyes of Divine Love. It was as if the realms of the opposing principles of Evil and Good were brought in one view before the gaze of man! Glyndon—the enthusiast, the poet, the artist, the dreamer—was enchained and entranced by emotions vague and undefinable, half of delight and half of pain. Leaning on the shoulder of his friend, he gazed around him, and heard, with deepening awe, the rumbling of the earth below, the wheels and voices of the Ministry of Nature in her darkest and most inscrutable recess. Suddenly, as a bomb from a shell, a huge stone was flung hundreds of yards up from the jaws of the crater, and falling with a mighty crash upon the rock below, split into ten thousand fragments, which bounded down the sides of the mountain, sparkling and groaning as they went. One of these, the largest fragment, struck the narrow space of soil between the Englishman and the guide, not three feet from the spot where the former stood. Merton uttered an exclamation of terror, and Glyndon held his breath and shuddered.

"Diavolo," cried the guide. "Descend, Excellencies, descend; we have not a moment to lose; follow me close."

So saying, the guide and the peasant fled with as much swiftness as they were able to bring to bear. Merton, ever more prompt and ready than his friend, imitated their example; and Glyndon, more confused than alarmed, followed close. But they had not gone many yards, before, with a rushing and sudden blast, came from the crater an enormous volume of vapour. It pursued—it overtook—it overspread them. It swept the light from the heavens. All was abrupt and utter darkness, and through the gloom was heard the shout of the guide, already distant, and lost in an instant amidst the sound of the rushing gust, and the groans of the earth beneath. Glyndon paused. He was separated from his friend—from the guide. He was

alone—with the Darkness and the Terror. The vapour rolled sullenly away; the form of the plumed fire was again dimly visible, and its struggling and perturbed reflection again shed a glow over the horrors of the path. Glyndon recovered himself, and sped onward. Below, he heard the voice of Merton calling on him, though he no longer saw his form. The sound served as a guide. Dizzy and breathless, he bounded forward; when—hark! a sullen, slow, rolling sound in his ear! He halted—and turned back to gaze. The fire had overflowed its course; it had opened itself a channel amidst the furrows of the mountain. The stream pursued him—fast—fast; and the hot breath of the chasing and preternatural foe came closer and closer upon his cheek. He turned aside: he climbed desperately, with hands and feet, upon a crag, that, to the right, broke the scathed and blasted level of the soil. The stream rolled beside and beneath him, and then, taking a sudden wind round the spot on which he stood, interposed its liquid fire, a broad and impassable barrier, between his resting-place and escape. There he stood, cut off from descent, and with no alternative but to retrace his steps towards the crater, and thence seek—without guide or clue—some other pathway.

For a moment his courage left him; he cried in despair, and in that overstrained pitch of voice which is never heard afar off, to the guide—to Merton—to return—to aid him.

No answer came—and the Englishman, thus abandoned solely to his own resources, felt his spirit and energy rise against the danger. He turned back, and ventured as far towards the crater as the noxious exhalation would permit; then, gazing below, carefully and deliberately, he chalked out for himself a path, by which he trusted to shun the direction the fire-stream had taken,—and trod firmly and quickly over the crumbling and heated strata.

He had proceeded about fifty yards, when he halted abruptly; an unspeakable and unaccountable horror, not hitherto felt amidst all his peril, came over him. He shook

in every limb; his muscles refused his will; he felt, as it were, palsied and death-stricken. The horror, I say, was unaccountable, for the path seemed clear and safe. The fire, above and behind, burnt out clear and far; and beyond, the stars lent him their cheering guidance. No obstacle was visible—no danger seemed at hand. As thus, spell-bound and panic-stricken, he stood chained to the soil—his breast heaving; large drops rolling down his brow; and his eyes starting wildly from their sockets—he saw before him, at some distance, gradually shaping itself more and more distinctly to his gaze, a Colossal Shadow—a shadow that seemed partially borrowed from the human shape, but immeasurably above the human stature; vague, dark, almost formless; and differing—he could not tell where, or why—not only from the proportions, but also from the limbs and outline of man.

The glare of the volcano, that seemed to shrink and collapse from this gigantic and appalling apparition, nevertheless threw its light, redly and steadily, upon another shape that stood beside, quiet, and motionless; and it was, perhaps, the contrast of these two things—the Being and the Shadow—that impressed the beholder with the difference between them—the Man and the Superhuman. It was but for a moment, nay, for the tenth part of a moment, that this sight was permitted to the wanderer. A second eddy of sulphureous vapours from the volcano, yet more rapidly, yet more densely than its predecessor, rolled over the mountain; and either the nature of the exhalation, or the excess of his own dread, was such, that Glyndon, after one wild gasp for breath, fell senseless on the earth.

CHAPTER X.

Merton and the Italians arrived in safety at the spot where they had left the mules; and not till they had recovered their own alarm and breath did they think of Glyn-

don. But then, as the minutes passed, and he appeared not, Merton—whose heart was as good, at least, as human hearts are in general—grew seriously alarmed. He insisted on returning to search for his friend; and by dint of prodigal promises, prevailed at last on the guide to accompany him. The lower part of the mountain lay calm and white in the starlight; and the guide's practised eye could discern all objects on the surface, at a considerable distance. They had not, however, gone very far, before they perceived two forms, slowly approaching towards them.

As they came near, Merton recognised the form of his friend. "Thank Heaven, he is safe," he cried, turning to the guide.

"Holy angels befriend us," said the Italian, trembling. "Behold the very being that crossed me last Sabbath night. It is he!—but his face is human now!"

"Signor Inglese," said the voice of Zicci, as Glyndon, pale, wan, and silent, returned passively the joyous greeting of Merton. "Signor Inglese, I told your friend we should meet to-night; you see, you have not foiled my prediction."

"But how—but where?" stammered Merton, in great confusion and surprise.

"I found your friend stretched on the ground, overpowered by the mephitic exhalation of the crater. I bore him to a purer atmosphere; and, as I know the mountain well, I have conducted him safely to you. This is all our history. You see, sir, that were it not for that prophecy which you desired to frustrate, your friend would, ere this time, have been a corpse; one minute more, and the vapour had done its work. Adieu; good night, and pleasant dreams."

"But, my preserver, you will not leave us," said Glyndon, anxiously, and speaking for the first time. "Will you not return with us?"

Zicci paused, and drew Glyndon aside. "Young man," said he, gravely, "it is necessary that we should again

meet to-night. It is necessary that you should, ere the first hour of morning, decide on your fate. Will you marry Isabel di Pisani—or lose her for ever? Consult not your friend; he is sensible and wise, but not now is his wisdom needed. There are times in life when, from the imagination, and not the reason, should wisdom come—this for you is one of them. I ask not your answer now. Collect your thoughts—recover your jaded and scattered spirits. It wants two hours of midnight—at midnight I will be with you!"

"Incomprehensible being," replied the Englishman, "I would leave the life you have preserved in your own hands. But since I have known you my whole nature has changed. A fiercer desire than that of love burns in my veins—the desire not to resemble, but to surpass my kind—the desire to penetrate and to share the secret of your own existence—the desire of a preternatural knowledge and unearthly power. Instruct me—school me—make me thine; and I surrender to thee at once, and without a murmur, the woman, that, till I saw thee, I would have defied a world to obtain."

"I ask not the sacrifice, Glyndon," replied Zicci coldly, yet mildly:—"yet, shall I own it to thee!—I am touched by the devotion I have inspired. I sicken for *human* companionship, sympathy, and friendship; yet I dread to share them,—for bold must be the man who can partake my existence, and enjoy my confidence. Once more I say to thee, in compassion and in warning, the choice of life is in thy hands—to-morrow it will be too late. On the one hand Isabel, a tranquil home, a happy and serene life—on the other hand, all is darkness—darkness, that even this eye cannot penetrate."

"But thou hast told me, that if I wed Isabel, I must be contented to be obscure; and if I refuse, that knowledge and power may be mine."

"Vain man! knowledge and power are not happiness."

"But they are better than happiness. Say—if I marry

Isabel, wilt thou be my master—my guide?—say this—and I am resolved."

"Never! It is only the lonely at heart—the restless—the desperate—that may be my pupils."

"Then I renounce her!—I renounce love—I renounce happiness. Welcome solitude—welcome despair—if they are the entrances to thy dark and sublime secret."

"I will not take thy answer now;—at midnight thou shalt give it in one word—ay or no! Farewell till then."

The mystic waved his hand; and descending rapidly—was seen no more.

Glyndon rejoined his impatient and wondering friend; but Merton, gazing on his face, saw that a great change had passed there. The flexile and dubious expression of youth was for ever gone. The features were locked, rigid, and stern; and so faded was the natural bloom, that an hour seemed to have done the work of years.

CHAPTER XI.

On returning from Vesuvius or Pompeii, you enter Naples, through its most animated, its most Neapolitan quarter—through that quarter in which Modern life most closely resembles the Ancient; and in which, when, on a fair day, the thoroughfare swarms alike with Indolence and Trade, you are impressed at once with the recollection of that restless, lively race, from which the population of Naples derives its origin: so that in one day you may see at Pompeii the habitations of a remote age, and on the Mole at Naples you may imagine you behold the very beings with which those habitations had been peopled. The language of words is dead, but the language of gestures remains little impaired. A fisherman, a peasant, of Naples, will explain to you the motions, the attitudes, the gestures of the figures

painted on the antique vases, better than the most learned antiquary of Göttingen or Leipsic.

But now, as the Englishmen rode slowly through the deserted streets, lighted but by the lamps of heaven, all the gaiety of the day was hushed and breathless. Here and there, stretched under a portico or a dingy booth, were sleeping groups of houseless Lazzaroni, a tribe now happily merging this indolent individuality amidst an energetic and active population.

The Englishmen rode on in silence; for Glyndon neither appeared to heed nor hear the questions and comments of Merton, and Merton himself was almost as weary as the jaded animal he bestrode.

Suddenly the silence of earth and ocean was broken by the sound of a distant clock, that proclaimed the last hour of night. Glyndon started from his reverie, and looked anxiously around. As the final stroke died, the noise of hoofs rung on the broad stones of the pavement, and from a narrow street to the right emerged the form of a solitary horseman. He neared the Englishmen, and Glyndon recognised the features and mien of Zicci.

"What! do we meet again, signor?" said Merton, in a vexed but drowsy tone.

"Your friend and I have business together," replied Zicci, as he wheeled his powerful and fiery steed to the side of Glyndon: "but it will be soon transacted. Perhaps you, sir, will ride on to your hotel."

"Alone?"

"There is no danger," returned Zicci, with a slight expression of disdain in his voice.

"None to me, but to Glyndon?"

"Danger from me. Ah—perhaps you are right."

"Go on, my dear Merton," said Glyndon, "I will join you before you reach the hotel."

Merton nodded, whistled, and pushed his horse into a kind of amble.

"Now your answer—quick."

"I have decided:—the love of Isabel has vanished from my heart. The pursuit is over."

"You have decided?"

"I have."

"Adieu! join your friend."

Zicci gave the rein to his horse; it sprang forward with a bound; the sparks flew from its hoofs, and horse and rider disappeared amidst the shadows of the street whence they had emerged.

Merton was surprised to see his friend by his side, a minute after they had parted.

"What business can you have with Zicci? Will you not confide in me?"

"Merton, do not ask me to-night; I am in a dream."

"I do not wonder at it, for even I am in a sleep. Let us push on."

In the retirement of his chamber, Glyndon sought to recollect his thoughts. He sat down on the foot of his bed, and pressed his hands tightly to his throbbing temples. The events of the last few hours—the apparition of the gigantic and shadowy Companion of the Mystic amidst the fires and clouds of Vesuvius—the strange encounter with Zicci himself, on a spot in which he could never have calculated on finding Glyndon, filled his mind with emotions, in which terror and awe the least prevailed. A fire, the train of which had long been laid, was lighted at his heart—the asbestos fire that once lit, is never to be quenched. All his early aspiration—his young ambition—his longings for the laurel, were mingled in one passionate yearning to overpass the bounds of the common knowledge of man, and reach that solemn spot, between two worlds, on which the mysterious stranger appeared to have fixed his home.

Far from recalling with renewed affright the remembrance of the apparition that had so appalled him, the recollection only served to kindle and concentrate his curiosity into a burning focus. He had said aright—love had vanished from his heart; there was no longer a serene space amidst

its disordered elements for human affection to move and breathe. The enthusiast was rapt from this earth; and he would have surrendered all that beauty ever promised, that mortal hope ever whispered, for one hour with Zicci beyond the portals of the visible world.

He rose, oppressed and fevered with the new thoughts that raged within him, and threw open his casement for air. The ocean lay suffused in the starry light, and the stillness of the heavens never more eloquently preached the morality of repose to the madness of earthly passions. But such was Glyndon's mood, that their very hush only served to deepen the wild desires that preyed upon his soul. And the solemn stars, that are mysteries in themselves, seemed by a kindred sympathy to agitate the wings of the spirit no longer contented with its cage. As he gazed, a star shot from its brethren—and vanished from the depth of space!

CHAPTER XII.

The sleep of Glyndon, that night, was unusually profound; and the sun streamed full upon his eyes as he opened them to the day. He rose refreshed, and with a strange sentiment of calmness, that seemed more the result of resolution than exhaustion. The incidents and emotions of the past night had settled into distinct and clear impressions. He thought of them but slightly,—he thought rather of the future. He was as one of the Initiated in the old Egyptian Mysteries, who have crossed the Gate only to look more ardently for the Penetralia.

He dressed himself, and was relieved to find that Merton had joined a party of his countrymen on an excursion to Ischia. He spent the heat of noon in thoughtful solitude, and gradually the image of Isabel returned to his heart. It was a holy—for it was a *human*—image: he had resigned her, and he repented. The light of day served, if

not to dissipate, at least to sober the turbulence and fervour of the preceding night. But was it indeed too late to retract his resolve? Too late! terrible words! Of what do we not repent, when the Ghost of the Deed returns to us to say: "Thou hast no recall"?

He started impatiently from his seat, seized his hat and sword, and strode with rapid steps to the humble abode of the actress.

The distance was considerable, and the air oppressive. Glyndon arrived at the door breathless and heated. He knocked, no answer came: he lifted the latch and entered. No sound, no sight of life, met his ear and eye. In the front chamber, on a table, lay the guitar of the actress and some manuscript parts in plays. He paused, and summoning courage, tapped at the door which seemed to lead into the inner apartment. The door was ajar; and, hearing no sound within, he pushed it open. It was the sleeping chamber of the young actress—that holiest ground to a lover; and well did the place become the presiding deity; none of the tawdry finery of the Profession was visible on the one hand, none of the slovenly disorder common to the humbler classes of the South on the other. All was pure and simple; even the ornaments were those of an innocent refinement:—a few books, placed carefully on shelves, a few half-faded flowers in an earthen vase, which was modelled and painted in the Etruscan fashion. The sunlight streamed over the snowy draperies of the bed, and a few articles of clothing, neatly folded, on the chair beside it. Isabel was not there; and Glyndon, as he gazed around, observed that the casement which opened to the ground was wrenched and broken, and several fragments of the shattered glass lay below. The light flashed at once upon Glyndon's mind—the ravisher had borne away his prize. The ominous words of Zicci were fulfilled: it was too late! Wretch that he was! perhaps he might have saved her. But the nurse,—was she gone also? He made the house resound with the name of Gionetta, but there was not even

an echo to reply. He resolved to repair at once to the abode of Zicci. On arriving at the palace of the Corsican, he was informed that the signor was gone to the banquet of the Prince di ——, and would not return until late. He turned in dismay from the door, and perceived the heavy carriage of the Count Cetoxa rolling along the narrow street. Cetoxa recognised him and stopped the carriage.

"Ah! my dear Signor Glyndon," said he, leaning out of the window, "and how goes your health? You heard the news?"

"What news?" asked Glyndon, mechanically.

"Why the beautiful actress—the wonder of Naples! I always thought she would have good luck."

"Well, well, what of her?"

"The Prince di —— has taken a prodigious fancy to her, and has carried her to his own palace. The Court is a little scandalised."

"The villain! by force?"

"Force! Ha! ha! my dear signor, what need of force to persuade an actress to accept the splendid protection of one of the wealthiest noblemen in Italy? Oh, no! you may be sure she went willingly enough. I only just heard the news: the Prince himself proclaimed his triumph this morning, and the accommodating Mascari has been permitted to circulate it. I hope the connection will not last long, or we shall lose our best singer—addio."

Glyndon stood mute and motionless. He knew not what to think—to believe—or how to act. Even Merton was not at hand to advise him. His conscience smote him bitterly; and half in despair, half in the courageous wrath of jealousy, he resolved to repair to the palace of the Prince himself, and demand his captive in the face of his assembled guests.

CHAPTER XIII.

We must go back to the preceding night. The actress and her nurse had returned from the theatre; and Isabel, fatigued and exhausted, had thrown herself on a sofa, while Gionetta busied herself with the long tresses which, released from the fillet that bound them, half concealed the form of the actress, like a veil of threads of gold; and while she smoothed the luxuriant locks, the old nurse ran gossiping on about the little events of the night,—the scandal and politics of the scenes and the tire-room.

The clock sounded the hour of midnight—and still Isabel detained the nurse; for a vague and foreboding fear, she could not account for, made her seek to protract the time of solitude and rest.

At length Gionetta's voice was swallowed up in successive yawns. She took her lamp, and departed to her own room, which was placed in the upper story of the house. Isabel was alone. The half-hour after midnight sounded dull and distant:—all was still—and she was about to enter her sleeping-room, when she heard the hoofs of a horse at full speed:—the sound ceased;—there was a knock at the door. Her heart beat violently; but fear gave way to another sentiment when she heard a voice, too well known, calling on her name. She went to the door.

"Open, Isabel—it is Zicci," said the voice again.

And why did the actress feel fear no more, and why did that virgin hand unbar the door to admit without a scruple or a doubt, at that late hour, the visit of the fairest cavalier of Naples? I know not;—but Zicci had become her destiny, and she obeyed the voice of her preserver as if it were the command of Fate.

Zicci entered with a light and hasty step. His horseman's cloak fitted tightly to his noble form; and the raven plumes of his broad hat threw a gloomy shade over his commanding features.

The girl followed him into the room, trembling and blushing deeply,—and stood before him with the lamp she held, shining upward on her cheek, and the long hair that fell like a shower of light over the bare shoulders and heaving bust.

"Isabel," said Zicci, in a voice that spoke deep emotion, "I am by thy side once more to save thee. Not a moment is to be lost. Thou must fly with me, or remain the victim of the Prince di ——. I would have made the charge I now undertake another's:—thou knowest I would—thou knowest it:—but he is not worthy of thee—the cold Englishman! I throw myself at thy feet: have trust in me—and fly."

He grasped her hand passionately as he dropped on his knee, and looked up into her face with his bright, beseeching eyes.

"Fly with thee!" said Isabel, tenderly.

"Thou knowest the penalty:—name—fame—honour—all will be sacrificed if thou dost not."

"Then—then," said the wild girl, falteringly, and turning aside her face, "then I am not indifferent to thee. Thou wouldst not give me to another:—thou lovest me?"

Zicci was silent—but his breast heaved—his cheeks flushed—his eyes darted dark but impassioned fire.

"Speak!" exclaimed Isabel, in jealous suspicion of his silence. "Speak, if thou lovest me."

"I dare not tell thee so:—I will not yet say I love thee."

"Then what matter my fate?" said Isabel, turning pale and shrinking from his side:—"leave me;—I fear no danger. My life, and therefore my honour, is in mine own hands."

"Be not so mad," said Zicci. "Hark! do you hear the neigh of my steed? it is an alarm that warns us of the approaching peril:—haste, or you are lost."

"Why do you care for me?" said the girl, bitterly. "Thou hast read my heart: thou knowest that I would fly with thee to the end of the world, if I were but sure of thy

love;—that all sacrifice of womanhood's repute were sweet to me, if regarded as the proof and seal of affection. But to be bound beneath the weight of a cold obligation—to be the beggar on the eyes of Indifference—to throw myself on one who loves me not—*that* were indeed the vilest sin of my sex. Ah! Zicci, rather let me die."

She had thrown back her clustering hair from her face as she spoke, and as she now stood with her arms drooping mournfully, and her hands clasped together with the proud bitterness of her wayward spirit, giving new zest and charm to her singular beauty, it was impossible to conceive a sight more irresistible to the senses and the heart.

"Tempt me not to thine own danger—perhaps destruction!" exclaimed Zicci, in faltering accents. "Thou canst not dream of what thou wouldst demand—come;" and, advancing, he wound his arm round her waist,—"come, Isabel; believe at least in my friendship—my protection——"

"And not thy love," said the Italian, turning on him her hurried and reproachful eyes. Those eyes met his, and he could not withdraw from the charm of their gaze. He felt her heart throbbing beneath his own—her breath came warm upon his cheek. He trembled—*he!*—the lofty—the mysterious Zicci—who seemed to stand aloof from his race. With a deep and burning sigh, he murmured, "Isabel, I love thee!"

That beautiful face, bathed in blushes, drooped upon his bosom; and, as he bent down, his lips sought the rosy mouth:—a long and burning kiss—danger—life—the world was forgotten! Suddenly Zicci tore himself from her.

"Oh, what have I said?—It is gone—my power to preserve thee—to guard thee—to foresee the storm in thy skies—is gone for ever. No matter! Haste;—haste; and may love supply the loss of prophecy and power!"

Isabel hesitated no more. She threw her mantle over her shoulders, and gathered up her dishevelled hair;—a moment—and she was prepared—when a sudden crash was heard in the inner room.

"Too late!—fool that I was—too late!" cried Zicci, in a sharp tone of agony, as he hurried to the outer door. He opened it, only to be borne back by the press of armed men: behind—before—escape was cut off! The room literally swarmed with the followers of the ravisher, masked—mailed—armed to the teeth.

Isabel was already in the grasp of two of the myrmidons: her shriek smote the ear of Zicci. He sprang forward, and Isabel heard his wild cry in a foreign tongue!—the gleam, the clash of swords. She lost her senses; and when she recovered, she found herself gagged, and in a carriage that was driven rapidly, by the side of a masked and motionless figure. The carriage stopped at the portals of a gloomy mansion. The gates opened noiselessly:—a broad flight of steps, brilliantly illumined, was before her:—she was in the palace of the Prince di ——

CHAPTER XIV.

The young actress was led to, and left alone in, a chamber adorned with all the luxurious and half-Eastern taste that, at one time, characterised the palaces of the great seigneurs of Italy. Her first thought was for Zicci: was he yet living—had he escaped unscathed the blades of the foe? her new treasure—the new light of her life—her lord, at last her lover.

She had short time for reflection. She heard steps approaching the chamber: she drew back. She placed her hand on the dagger that at all hours she wore concealed in her bosom. Living, or dead, she would be faithful still to Zicci! There was a new motive to the preservation of honour. The door opened, and the Prince entered in a dress that sparkled with jewels.

"Fair and cruel one," said he, advancing, with a half-sneer upon his lip, "thou wilt not too harshly blame the

violence of love." He attempted to take her hand as he spoke.

"Nay," said he, as she recoiled, "reflect that thou art now in the power of one that never faltered in the pursuit of an object less dear to him than thou art. Thy lover, presumptuous though he be, is not by to save thee. Mine thou art, but instead of thy master, suffer me to be thy slave."

"My lord," said Isabel, with a stern gravity which perhaps the Stage had conspired with Nature to bestow upon her, "your boast is in vain:—Your power! I am *not* in your power. Life and death are in my own hands. I will not defy—but I do not fear you. I feel—and in some feelings," added Isabel, with a solemnity almost thrilling, "there is all the strength and all the divinity of knowledge —I feel that I am safe even here: but you—you, Prince di ——, have brought danger to your home and hearth!"

The Neapolitan seemed startled by an earnestness and a boldness he was but little prepared for. He was not, however, a man easily intimidated or deterred from any purpose he had formed, and approaching Isabel, he was about to reply with much warmth, real or affected, when a knock was heard at the door of the chamber. The sound was repeated, and the Prince, chafed at the interruption, opened the door, and demanded, impatiently, who had ventured to disobey his orders, and invade his leisure. Mascari presented himself, pale and agitated: "My lord," said he, in a whisper, "pardon me; but a stranger is below, who insists on seeing you; and from some words he let fall, I judged it advisable even to infringe your commands."

"A stranger—and at this hour! What business can he pretend? Why was he even admitted?"

"He asserts that your life is in imminent danger. The source whence it proceeds he will relate to your Excellency alone."

The Prince frowned; but his colour changed. He mused a moment, and then, re-entering the chamber, and advancing towards Isabel, he said:

"Believe me, fair creature, I have no wish to take advantage of my power. I would fain trust alone to the gentler authorities of affection. Hold yourself queen within these walls more absolutely than you have ever enacted that part on the stage. To-night—farewell! May your sleep be calm, and your dreams propitious to my hopes!"

With these words he retired, and in a few moments Isabel was surrounded by officious attendants, whom she at length, with some difficulty, dismissed; and refusing to retire to rest, she spent the night in examining the chamber, which she found was secured, and in thoughts of Zicci, in whose power she felt an almost preternatural confidence.

Meanwhile, the Prince descended the stairs, and sought the room into which the stranger had been shown.

He found him wrapped from head to foot in a long robe —half gown, half mantle—such as was sometimes worn by ecclesiastics. The face of this stranger was remarkable: so sunburnt and swarthy were his hues, that he must, apparently, have derived his origin amongst the races of the farthest East. His forehead was lofty, and his eyes so penetrating, yet so calm in their gaze, that the Prince shrunk from them as we shrink from a questioner who is drawing forth the guiltiest secrets of our hearts.

"What would you with me?" asked the Prince, motioning his visitor to a seat.

"Prince di ——," said the stranger, in a voice deep and sweet, but foreign in its accent, "son of the most energetic and masculine race that ever applied godlike genius to the service of the Human Will, with its winding wickedness and its stubborn grandeur—descendant of the great Visconti, in whose chronicles lies the History of Italy in her palmy day, and in whose rise was the development of the mightiest intellect ripened by the most relentless ambition—I come to gaze upon the last star in a darkening firmament. By this hour to-morrow space shall know it not. Man! thy days are numbered!"

"What means this jargon?" said the Prince, in visible

astonishment and secret awe. "Comest thou to menace me in my own halls, or wouldst thou warn me of a danger? Art thou some itinerant mountebank, or some unguessed-of friend? Speak out, and plainly. What danger threatens me?"

"Zicci!" replied the stranger.

"Ha! ha!" said the Prince, laughing scornfully; "I half suspected thee from the first. Thou art, then, the accomplice or the tool of that most dexterous, but, at present, defeated charlatan. And I suppose thou wilt tell me that, if I were to release a certain captive I have made, the danger would vanish, and the hand of the dial would be put back?"

"Judge of me as thou wilt, Prince di ——. I confess my knowledge of Zicci; a knowledge shared but by a few, who—but this touches thee not. I would save—therefore I warn thee. Dost thou ask me why? I will tell thee. Canst thou remember to have heard wild tales of thy grandsire?—of his desire for a knowledge that passes that of the schools and cloisters?—of a strange man from the East, who was his familiar and master in lore, against which the Vatican has from age to age launched its mimic thunder? Dost thou call to mind the fortunes of thy ancestor?—how he succeeded in youth to little but a name?—how, after a career wild and dissolute as thine, he disappeared from Milan, a pauper and a self-exile?—how, after years spent —none knew in what climes or in what pursuits—he again revisited the city where his progenitors had reigned?—how with him came this wise man of the East—the mystic Mejnour?—how they who beheld him, beheld with amaze and fear that time had ploughed no furrow on his brow—that youth seemed fixed as by a spell upon his face and form? Dost thou know that from that hour his fortunes rose? Kinsmen the most remote died; estate upon estate fell into the hands of the ruined noble. He allied himself with the royalty of Austria—he became the guide of princes, the first magnate of Italy. He founded anew the house of which thou art the last lineal upholder, and transferred its

splendour from Milan to the Sicilian realms. Visions of high ambition were then present with him nightly and daily. Had he lived, Italy would have known a new dynasty, and the Visconti would have reigned over Magna-Grecia. He was a man, such as the world rarely sees; he was worthy to be of us, worthy to be the pupil of Mejnour:—whom you now see before you."

The Prince, who had listened with deep and breathless attention to the words of his singular guest, started from his seat at his last words. "Impostor!" he cried, "can you dare thus to play with my credulity? Sixty years have passed since my grandsire died, and you, a man younger apparently than myself, have the assurance to pretend to have been his contemporary! But you have imperfectly learned your tale. You know not, it seems, that my grandsire—wise and illustrious indeed, in all save his faith in a charlatan—was found dead in his bed, in the very hour when his colossal plans were ripe for execution, and that Mejnour was guilty of his murder?"

"Alas!" answered the stranger, in a voice of great sadness, "had he but listened to Mejnour, had he delayed the last and most perilous ordeal of daring wisdom until the requisite training and initiation had been completed, your ancestor would have stood with me upon an eminence which the waters of Death itself wash everlastingly, but cannot overflow. Your grandsire resisted my fervent prayers, disobeyed my most absolute commands, and in the sublime rashness of a soul that panted for the last secrets, perished—the victim of his own frenzy."

"He was poisoned, and Mejnour fled."

"Mejnour fled not," answered the stranger, quickly and proudly. "Mejnour could not fly from danger, for to him danger is a thing long left behind. It was the day before the duke took the fatal draught, which he believed was to confer on the mortal the immortal boon, that, finding my power over him was gone, I abandoned him to his doom. On the night on which your grandsire breathed his last, I

was standing alone at moonlight on the ruins of Persepolis, —for my wanderings, space hath no obstacle. But a truce with this;—I loved your grandsire; I would save the last of his race. Oppose not thyself to Zicci. Oppose not thyself to thine evil passions. Draw back from the precipice, while there is yet time. In thy front, and in thine eyes, I detect some of that diviner glory which belonged to thy race. Thou hast in thee some germs of their hereditary genius, but they are choked up by worse than thy hereditary vices. Recollect, by genius thy house rose—by vice it ever failed to perpetuate its power. In the laws which regulate the Universe it is decreed, that nothing wicked can long endure. Be wise, and let history warn thee. Thou standest on the verge of two worlds—the Past and the Future; and voices from either shriek omen in thy ear. I have done. I bid thee farewell."

"Not so;—thou shalt not quit these walls. I will make experiment of thy boasted power. What, ho there! ho!"

The Prince shouted; the room was filled with his minions.

"Seize that man!" he cried, pointing to the spot which had been filled by the form of Mejnour. To his inconceivable amaze and horror, the spot was vacant. The mysterious stranger had vanished like a dream.

CHAPTER XV.

It was the first faint and gradual break of the summer dawn; and two men stood in a balcony overhanging a garden fragrant with the scents of the awakening flowers. The stars had not left the sky—the birds were yet silent on the boughs; all was still, hushed, and tranquil; but how different the tranquillity of reviving day from the solemn repose of night! In the music of silence there are a thousand variations. These men, who alone seemed awake in Naples,

were Zicci and the mysterious stranger, who had but an hour or two ago startled the Prince di —— in his voluptuous palace.

"No," said the latter, "hadst thou delayed the acceptance of the Arch Gift, until thou hadst attained to the years, and passed through all the desolate bereavements, that chilled and seared myself, ere my researches had made it mine, thou wouldst have escaped the curse of which thou complainest now. Thou wouldst not have mourned over the brevity of human affection as compared to the duration of thine own existence; for thou wouldest have survived the very desire and dream of the love of woman. Brightest and, but for that error, perhaps the loftiest, of the secret and solemn race that fills up the interval in creation between mankind and the demons, age after age wilt thou rue the splendid folly which made thee ask to carry the beauty and the passions of youth into the dreary grandeur of earthly immortality."

"I do not repent, nor shall I," answered Zicci, codly. "The transport and the sorrow, so wildly blended, which diversify my doom, are better than the calm and bloodless tenor of thy solitary way. Thou, who lovest nothing, hatest nothing—feelest nothing; and walkest the world with the noiseless and joyless footsteps of a dream!"

"You mistake," replied he who had owned the name of Mejnour,—"though I care not for love, and am dead to every *passion* that agitates the sons of clay, I am not dead to their more serene enjoyments. I have still left to me the sublime pleasures of wisdom and of friendship. I carry down the stream of the countless years, not the turbulent desires of youth—but the calm and spiritual delights of age. Wisely and deliberately I abandoned youth for ever when I separated my lot from men. Let us not envy or reproach each other. I would have saved this Neapolitan, Zicci (since so it now pleases thee to be called), partly because his grandsire was but divided by the last airy barrier from our own brotherhood—partly because I know that

in the man himself lurk the elements of ancestral courage and power, which in earlier life would have fitted him for one of us. Earth holds but few to whom nature has given the qualities that can bear the ordeal! But time and excess, that have thickened the grosser senses, have blunted the imagination. I relinquish him to his doom."

"And still then, Mejnour, you cherish the desire to increase our scanty and scattered host by new converts and allies; surely—surely—thy experience might have taught thee, that scarcely once in a thousand years is born the being who can pass through the horrible gates that lead into the worlds without. Is not thy path already strewed with thy victims? Do not their ghastly faces of agony and fear—the bloodstained suicide, the raving maniac—rise before thee, and warn what is yet left to thee of human sympathy from thy insane ambition?"

"Nay," answered Mejnour,—"have I not had success to counterbalance failure? And can I forego this lofty and august hope, worthy alone of our high condition—the hope to form a mighty and numerous race with a force and power sufficient to permit them to acknowledge to mankind their majestic conquests and dominion—to become the true lords of this planet—invaders, perchance of others,—masters of the inimical and malignant tribes by which at this moment we are surrounded,—a race that may proceed, in their deathless destinies, from stage to stage of celestial glory, and rank at last among the nearest ministrants and agents gathered round the Throne of Thrones? What matter a thousand victims for one convert to our band? And you, Zicci (continued Mejnour, after a pause)—you, even you, should this affection for a mortal beauty that you have dared, despite yourself, to cherish, be more than a passing fancy—should it, once admitted into your inmost nature, partake of its bright and enduring essence—even you may brave all things to raise the beloved one into your equal. Nay, interrupt me not. Can you see sickness menace her—danger hover around—years creep on—the eyes grow dim

—the beauty fade—while the heart, youthful still, clings and fastens round your own—can you see this, and know it is yours to——"

"Cease," cried Zicci, fiercely. "What is all other fate as compared to the death of terror? What! when the coldest sage—the most heated enthusiast—the hardiest warrior, with his nerves of iron—have been found dead in their beds, with straining eyeballs and horrent hair, at the first step of the Dread Progress,—thinkest thou that this weak woman—from whose cheek a sound at the window, the screech of the night-owl, the sight of a drop of blood on a man's sword, would start the colour—could brave one glance of—away! the very thought of such sights for her, makes even myself a coward!"

"When you told her you loved her—when you clasped her to your breast, you renounced all power to prophesy her future lot, or protect her from harm. Henceforth to her you are human, and human only. How know you, then, to what you may be tempted?—how know you what her curiosity may learn and her courage brave? But enough of this—you are bent on your pursuit?"

"The fiat has gone forth."

"And to-morrow?"

"To-morrow at this hour our bark will be bounding over yonder ocean, and the weight of ages will have fallen from my heart! Fool, *thou* hast given up *thy* youth!"

CHAPTER XVI.

The Prince di —— was not a man whom Naples could suppose to be addicted to superstitious fancies; neither was the age one in which the belief of sorcery was prevalent. Still, in the south of Italy, there was then, and there still lingers, a certain spirit of credulity, which may, ever and anon, be visible amidst the boldest dogmas of their philoso-

phers and sceptics. In his childhood the Prince had learned strange tales of the ambition, the genius, and the career of his grandsire,—and secretly, perhaps influenced by ancestral example, in earlier youth he himself had followed, not only through her legitimate course, but her antiquated and erratic windings. I have, indeed, been shown in Naples a little volume, blazoned with the arms of the Visconti, and ascribed to the nobleman I refer to, which treats of alchemy in a spirit half mocking and half reverential.

Pleasure soon distracted him from such speculations, and his talents, which were unquestionably great, were wholly perverted to extravagant intrigues, or to the embellishment of a gorgeous ostentation with something of classic grace. His immense wealth, his imperious pride, his unscrupulous and daring character, made him an object of no inconsiderable fear to a feeble and timid court: and the ministers of the indolent government willingly connived at excesses which allured him at least from ambition. The strange visit, and yet more strange departure, of Mejnour filled the breast of the Neapolitan with awe and wonder, against which all the haughty arrogance and learned scepticism of his maturer manhood combated in vain. The apparition of Mejnour served, indeed, to invest Zicci with a character in which the Prince had not hitherto regarded him. He felt a strange alarm at the rival he had braved—at the foe he had provoked. His night was sleepless, and the next morning he came to the resolution of leaving Isabel in peace until after the banquet of that day, to which he had invited Zicci. He felt as if the death of the mysterious Corsican were necessary for the preservation of his own life; and if at an earlier period of their rivalry he had determined on the fate of Zicci, the warnings of Mejnour only served to confirm his resolve.

"We will try if his magic can invent an antidote to the bane," said he, half aloud and with a gloomy smile, as he summoned Mascari to his presence. The poison which the Prince, with his own hands, mixed into the wine in-

tended for his guest was compounded from materials the secret of which had been one of the proudest heirlooms of that able and evil race which gave to Italy her wisest and fellest tyrants. Its operation was quick, not sudden—it produced no pain—it left on the form no grim convulsion, on the skin no purpling spot, to arouse suspicion,—you might have cut and carved every membrane and fibre of the corpse, but the sharpest eyes of the leech would not have detected the presence of the subtle life-queller. For twelve hours the victim felt nothing, save a joyous and elated exhilaration of the blood—a delicious languor followed, the sure forerunner of apoplexy. No lancet then could save! Apoplexy had run much in the families of the enemies of the Visconti!

The hour of the feast arrived—the guests assembled. There were the flower of the Neapolitan *seignorie*—the descendants of the Norman, the Teuton, the Goth; for Naples had then a nobility, but derived it from the north, which has indeed been the *Nutrix Leonum*, the nurse of the lion-hearted chivalry of the world.

Last of the guests came Zicci, and the crowd gave way as the dazzling foreigner moved along to the lord of the palace. The Prince greeted him with a meaning smile, to which Zicci answered by a whisper, "He who plays with loaded dice does not always win."

The Prince bit his lip; and Zicci, passing on, seemed deep in conversation with the fawning Mascari.

"Who is the Prince's heir?" asked the Corsican.

"A distant relation on the mother's side; with his Excellency dies the male line."

"Is the heir present at our host's banquet?"

"No; they are not friends."

"No matter; he will be here to-morrow!"

Mascari stared in surprise; but the signal for the banquet was given, and the guests were marshalled to the board. As was the custom, the feast took place at midday. It was a long oval hall, the whole of one side opening by a marble

colonnade upon a court or garden, in which the eye rested gratefully upon cool fountains and statues of whitest marble, half sheltered by orange trees. Every art that luxury could invent to give freshness and coolness to the languid and breezeless heat of the day without (a day on which the breath of the sirocco was abroad) had been called into existence. Artificial currents of air through invisible tubes, silken blinds waving to and fro as if to cheat the senses into the belief of an April wind, and miniature *jets d'eau* in each corner of the apartment gave to the Italians the same sense of exhilaration and *comfort* (if I may use the word) which the well-drawn curtains and the blazing hearth afford to the children of colder climes.

The conversation was somewhat more lively and intellectual than is common among the languid pleasure-hunters of the south; for the Prince, himself accomplished, sought his acquaintance not only amongst the *beaux esprits* of his own country, but amongst the gay foreigners who adorned and relieved the monotony of the Neapolitan circles. There were present two or three of the brilliant Frenchmen of the old regime, and their peculiar turn of thought and wit was well calculated for the meridian of a society that made the *dolce far niente* at once its philosophy and its faith. The Prince, however, was more silent than usual; and when he sought to rouse himself, his spirits were forced and exaggerated. To the manners of his host, those of Zicci afforded a striking contrast. The bearing of this singular person was at all times characterised by a calm and polished ease, which was attributed by the courtiers to the long habit of society. He could scarcely be called gay; yet few persons more tended to animate the general spirits of a convivial circle. He seemed, by a kind of intuition, to elicit from each companion the qualities in which he most excelled; and a certain tone of latent mockery that characterised his remarks upon the topics on which the conversation fell, seemed to men who took nothing in earnest to be the language both of wit and wisdom. To the Frenchmen, in

particular, there was something startling in his intimate knowledge of the minutest events in their own capital and country, and his profound penetration (evinced but in epigrams and sarcasms) into the eminent characters who were then playing a part upon the great stage of Continental intrigue. It was while this conversation grew animated, and the feast was at its height, that Glyndon (who, as the reader will recollect, had resolved, on learning from Cetoxa the capture of the actress, to seek the Prince himself) arrived at the palace. The porter, perceiving by his dress that he was not one of the invited guests, told him that his Excellency was engaged, and on no account could be disturbed; and Glyndon then, for the first time, became aware of how strange and embarrassing was the duty he had taken on himself. To force an entrance into the banquet hall of a great and powerful noble, surrounded by the rank of Naples, and to arraign him for what to his boon companions would appear but an act of gallantry, was an exploit that could not fail to be at once ludicrous and impotent. He mused a moment, and remembering that Zicci was among the guests, determined to apply himself to the Corsican. He therefore, slipping a few crowns into the porter's hand, said that he was commissioned to seek the Signor Zicci upon an errand of life and death; and easily won his way across the court, and into the interior building. He passed up the broad staircase, and the voices and merriment of the revellers smote his ear at a distance. At the entrance of the reception rooms he found a page, whom he despatched with a message to Zicci. The page did the errand; and the Corsican, on hearing the whispered name of Glyndon, turned to his host.

"Pardon me, my lord: an English friend of mine, the Signor Glyndon (not unknown by name to your Excellency), waits without—the business must indeed be urgent on which he has sought me in such an hour. You will forgive my momentary absence."

"Nay, signor," answered the Prince, courteously, but

with a sinister smile on his countenance, "would it not be better for your friend to join us? An Englishman is welcome everywhere; and even were he a Dutchman, your friendship would invest his presence with attraction. Pray his attendance—we would not spare you even for a moment."

Zicci bowed—the page was despatched with all flattering messages to Glyndon—a seat next to Zicci was placed for him, and the young Englishman entered.

"You are most welcome, sir. I trust your business to our illustrious guest is of good omen and pleasant import. If you bring evil news, defer it, I pray you."

Glyndon's brow was sullen, and he was about to startle the guests by his reply, when Zicci, touching his arm significantly, whispered in English, "I know why you have sought me. Be silent, and witness what ensues."

"You know, then, that Isabel, whom you boasted you had the power to save from danger——"

"Is in this house?—yes. I know also that murder sits at the right hand of our host. Be still, and learn the fate that awaits the foes of Zicci."

"My lord," said the Corsican, speaking aloud, "the Signor Glyndon has indeed brought me tidings which, though not unexpected, are unwelcome. I learn that which will oblige me to leave Naples to-morrow, though I trust but for a short time. I have now a new motive to make the most of the present hour."

"And what, if I may venture to ask, may be the cause which brings such affliction on the fair dames of Naples?"

"It is the approaching death of one who honoured me with most loyal friendship," replied Zicci, gravely. "Let us not speak of it—grief cannot put back the dial. As we supply by new flowers those that fade in our vases, so it is the secret of worldly wisdom to replace by fresh friendships those that fade from our path."

"True philosophy," exclaimed the Prince. "'Not to admire' was the Roman's maxim; never to mourn is mine. There is nothing in life to grieve for, save, indeed, Signor

Zicci, when some beauty on whom we have set our heart slips from our grasp. In such a moment we have need of all our wisdom not to succumb to despair and shake hands with death. What say you, signor? You smile. Such never could be your lot. Pledge me in a sentiment: 'Long life to the fortunate lover—a quick release to the baffled suitor!' "

"I pledge you," said Zicci. And as the fatal wine was poured into his glass, he repeated, fixing his eyes on the Prince, "I pledge you even in this wine!"

He lifted the glass to his lips. The Prince seemed ghastly pale, while the gaze of the Corsican bent upon him with an intent and stern brightness that the conscience-stricken host cowered and quailed beneath. Not till he had drained the draught, and replaced the glass upon the board, did Zicci turn his eyes from the Prince; and he then said, "Your wine has been kept too long—it has lost its virtues. It might disagree with many; but do not fear—it will not harm me, Prince. Signor Mascari, you are a judge of the grape—will you favour us with your opinion?"

"Nay," answered Mascari, with well-affected composure, "I like not the wines of Cyprus—they are heating. Perhaps Signor Glyndon may not have the same distaste. The English are said to love their potations warm and pungent."

"Do you wish my friend also to taste the wine, Prince?" said Zicci. "Recollect all cannot drink it with the same impunity as myself."

"No," said the Prince, hastily; "if you do not recommend the wine, Heaven forbid that we should constrain our guests! My Lord Duke," turning to one of the Frenchmen, "yours is the true soil of Bacchus. What think you of this cask from Burgundy? has it borne the journey?"

"Ah!" said Zicci, "let us change both the wine and the theme." With that the Corsican grew more animated and brilliant. Never did wit more sparkling, airy, exhilarating, flash from the lips of reveller. His spirits fascinated all

present—even the Prince himself—even Glyndon—with a strange and wild contagion. The former, indeed, whom the words and gaze of Zicci, when he drained the poison, had filled with fearful misgivings, now hailed in the brilliant eloquence of his wit a certain sign of the operation of the bane. The wine circulated fast; but none seemed conscious of its effects. One by one the rest of the party fell into a charmed and spell-bound silence, as Zicci continued to pour forth sally upon sally, tale upon tale. They hung on his words—they almost held their breath to listen. Yet how bitter was his mirth—how full of contempt for all things—how deeply steeped in the coldness of the derision that makes sport of life itself!

Night came on: the room grew dim, and the feast had lasted several hours longer than was the customary duration of similar entertainments at that day. Still the guests stirred not, and still Zicci continued, with glittering eye and mocking lip, to lavish his stores of intellect and anecdote, when suddenly the moon rose, and shed its rays over the flowers and fountains in the court without, leaving the room itself half in shadow and half tinged by a quiet and ghostly light.

It was then that Zicci rose. "Well, gentlemen," said he, "we have not yet wearied our host, I hope, and his garden offers a new temptation to protract our stay. Have you no musicians among your train, Prince, that might regale our ears while we inhale the fragrance of your orange trees?"

"An excellent thought," said the Prince. "Mascari, see to the music."

The party rose simultaneously to adjourn to the garden; and then, for the first time, the effect of the wine they had drunk seemed to make itself felt.

With flushed cheeks and unsteady steps they came into the open air, which tended yet more to stimulate that glowing fever of the grape. As if to make up for the silence with which the guests had hitherto listened to Zicci, every

tongue was now loosened—every man talked, no man listened. In the serene beauty of the night and scene, there was something wild and fearful in the contrast of the hubbub and Babel of these disorderly roysterers. One of the Frenchmen, in especial, the young Duc de R——, —a nobleman of the highest rank, and of all the quick, vivacious, and irascible temperament of his countrymen,—was particularly noisy and excited. And as circumstances, the remembrance of which is still preserved among certain circles of Naples, rendered it afterwards necessary that the Duc should himself give evidence of what occurred, I will here translate the short account he drew up, and which was kindly submitted to me some few years ago by my accomplished and lively friend, il Cavaliere di B——.

"I never remember," writes the Duc, "to have felt my spirits so excited as on that evening; we were like so many boys released from school, jostling each other as we reeled or ran down the flight of seven or eight stairs that led from the colonnade into the garden,—some laughing, some whooping, some scolding, some babbling. The wine had brought out, as it were, each man's inmost character. Some were loud and quarrelsome, others sentimental and whining; some whom we had hitherto thought dull, most mirthful; some whom we had ever regarded as discreet and taciturn, most garrulous and uproarious. I remember that in the midst of our most clamorous gaiety my eye fell upon the foreign cavalier, Signor Zicci, whose conversation had so enchanted us all; and I felt a certain chill come over me to perceive that he bore the same calm and unsympathising smile upon his countenance which had characterised it in his singular and curious stories of the court of Louis XV. I felt, indeed, half inclined to seek a quarrel with one whose composure was almost an insult to our disorder. Nor was such an effect of this irritating and mocking tranquillity confined to myself alone. Several of the party have told me since that on looking at Zicci they felt

their blood rise and their hands wander to their sword-hilts. There seemed in the icy smile a very charm to wound vanity and provoke rage. It was at this moment that the Prince came up to me, and, passing his arm into mine, led me a little apart from the rest. He had certainly indulged in the same excess as ourselves, but it did not produce the same effect of noisy excitement. There was, on the contrary, a certain cold arrogance and supercilious scorn in his bearing and language, which, even while affecting so much caressing courtesy towards me, roused my self-love against him. He seemed as if Zicci had infected him, and that in imitating the manner of his guest he surpassed the original. He rallied me on some court gossip which had honoured my name by associating it with a certain beautiful and distinguished Sicilian lady, and affected to treat with contempt that which, had it been true, I should have regarded as a boast. He spoke, indeed, as if he himself had gathered all the flowers of Naples, and left us foreigners only the gleanings he had scorned; at this my natural and national gallantry was piqued, and I retorted by some sarcasms that I should certainly have spared had my blood been cooler. He laughed heartily, and left me in a strange fit of resentment and anger. Perhaps (I must own the truth) the wine had produced in me a wild disposition to take offence and provoke quarrel. As the Prince left me, I turned, and saw Zicci at my side.

"'The Prince is a braggart,' said he, with the same smile that displeased me before. 'He would monopolise all fortune and all love. Let us take our revenge.'

"'And how?'

"'He has at this moment, in his house, the most enchanting singer in Naples—the celebrated Isabel di Pisani. She is here, it is true, not by her own choice; he carried her hither by force, but he will pretend to swear that she adores him. Let us insist on his producing the secret treasure, and when she enters, the Duc de R—— can have no doubt that his flatteries and attentions will charm the lady, and

provoke all the jealous fears of our host. It would be a fair revenge upon his imperious self-conceit.'

"This suggestion delighted me. I hastened to the Prince. At that instant the musicians had just commenced. I waved my hand, ordered the music to stop, and addressing the Prince, who was standing in the centre of one of the gayest groups, complained of his want of hospitality in affording to us such poor proficients in the art, while he reserved for his own solace the lute and voice of the first performer in Naples. I demanded, half laughingly, half seriously, that he should produce the Pisani. My demand was received with shouts of applause by the rest. We drowned the replies of our host with uproar, and would hear no denial. 'Gentlemen,' at last said the Prince, when he could obtain an audience, 'even were I to assent to your proposal, I could not induce the Signora to present herself before an assemblage as riotous as they are noble. You have too much chivalry to use compulsion with her, though the Duc de R—— forgets himself sufficiently to administer it to me.'

"I was stung by this taunt, however well deserved. 'Prince,' said I, 'I have for the indelicacy of compulsion so illustrious an example, that I cannot hesitate to pursue the path honoured by your own footsteps. All Naples knows that the Pisani despises at once your gold and your love,—that force alone could have brought her under your roof, and that you refuse to produce her, because you fear her complaints, and know enough of the chivalry your vanity sneers at to feel assured that the gentlemen of France are not more disposed to worship beauty than to defend it from wrong.

"'You speak well, sir,' said Zicci, gravely. 'The Prince dare not produce his prize!'

"The Prince remained speechless for a few moments, as if with indignation. At last he broke out into expressions the most injurious and insulting against Signor Zicci and myself. Zicci replied not—I was more hot and hasty.

The guests appeared to delight in our dispute. None except Mascari, whom we pushed aside and disdained to hear, strove to conciliate; some took one side, some another. The issue may be well foreseen. Swords were drawn. I had left mine in the ante-room—Zicci offered me his own—I seized it eagerly. There might be some six or eight persons engaged in a strange and confused kind of *mêlée*, but the Prince and myself only sought each other. The noise around us—the confusion of the guests—the cries of the musicians—the clash of our own swords, only served to stimulate our unhappy fury. We feared to be interrupted by the attendants, and fought like madmen, without skill or method. I thrust and parried mechanically, blind and frantic as if a demon had entered into me, till I saw the Prince stretched at my feet, bathed in his blood, and Zicci bending over him and whispering in his ear. The sight cooled us all—the strife ceased. We gathered in shame, remorse and horror round our ill-fated host; but it was too late—his eyes rolled fearfully in his head, and still he struggled to release himself from Zicci's arms, who continued to whisper (I trust divine comfort) in his ear. I have seen men die, but never one who wore such horror on his countenance. At last all was over; Zicci rose from the corpse, and taking, with great composure, his sword from my hand,—'Ye are witnesses, gentlemen,' said he, calmly, 'that the Prince brought his fate upon himself. The last of that illustrious house has perished in a brawl.'

"I saw no more of Zicci—I hastened to the French ambassador to narrate the event, and abide the issue. I am grateful to the Neapolitan government, and to the illustrious heir of the unfortunate nobleman, for the lenient and generous, yet just, interpretation put upon a misfortune the memory of which will afflict me to the last hour of my life.

(Signed) "Louis Victor, Duc de R."

In the above memorial, the reader will find the most exact and minute account yet given of an event which

created the most lively sensation at Naples in that day, and the narration of which first induced me to collect the materials of this history—which the reader will perceive, as it advances, is altogether different in its nature, its agencies, and its aims, from those tales of external terror, whether derived from ingenious imposture or supernatural mystery, that have given life to French melodrama or German romance.

CHAPTER XVII.

Glyndon had taken no part in the affray—neither had he participated largely in the excesses of the revel. For his exemption from both he was perhaps indebted to the whispered exhortations of Zicci. When the last rose from the corpse and withdrew from that scene of confusion, Glyndon remarked that in passing the crowd he touched Mascari on the shoulder, and said something which the Englishman did not overhear. Glyndon followed Zicci into the banquet-room—which, save where the moonlight slept on the marble floor, was wrapt in the sad and gloomy shadows of the advancing night.

"How could you foretell this fearful event?—he fell not by your arm!" said Glyndon in a tremulous and hollow tone.

"The general who calculates on the victory does not fight in person," answered Zicci; "but enough of this—meet me at midnight by the seashore—half a mile to the left of your hotel,—you will know the spot, by a rude pillar, the only one near ——, to which a broken chain is attached. There and then will be the crisis of your fate—go—I have business here yet—remember, Isabel is still in the house of the dead man."

As Glyndon yet hesitated, strange thoughts, doubts and fears that longed for speech crowding within him, Mascari approached, and Zicci, turning to the Italian, and waving

his hand to Glyndon, drew the former aside. Glyndon slowly departed.

"Mascari," said Zicci, "your patron is no more—your services will be valueless to his heir—a sober man, whom poverty has preserved from vice. For yourself, thank me that I do not give you up to the executioner—recollect the wine of Cyprus. Well, never tremble, man, it could not act on me, though it might re-act on others;—in that it is a common type of crime. I forgive you; and if the wine should kill me, I promise you that my ghost shall not haunt so worshipful a penitent. Enough of this; conduct me to the chamber of Isabel di Pisani. You have no farther need of her. The death of the jailer opens the cell of the captive. Be quick—I would be gone." Mascari muttered some inaudible words, bowed low, and led the way to the chamber in which Isabel was confined.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It wanted several minutes of midnight, and Glyndon repaired to the appointed spot. The mysterious empire which Zicci had acquired over him was still more solemnly confirmed by the events of the last few hours,—the sudden fate of the Prince, so deliberately foreshadowed, and yet so seemingly accidental—brought out by causes the most commonplace, and yet associated with words the most prophetic—impressed him with the deepest sentiments of admiration and awe. It was as if this dark and wondrous being would convert the most ordinary events and the meanest instruments into the agencies of his inscrutable will—yet, if so, why have permitted the capture of Isabel? Why not have prevented the crime rather than punished the criminal? And did Zicci really feel love for Isabel? Love, and yet offer to resign her to himself—to a rival

whom his arts could not fail to baffle. He no longer reverted to the belief that Zicci or Isabel had sought to dupe him into marriage. His fear and reverence for the former now forbade the notion of so poor an imposture. Did he any longer love Isabel himself? No—when that morning he heard of her danger—he had, it is true, returned to the sympathies and the fears of affection; but with the death of the Prince her image faded again from his heart—and he felt no jealous pang at the thought that she had been saved by Zicci—that at that moment, she was perhaps beneath his roof. Whoever has, in the course of his life, indulged the absorbing passion of the gamester, will remember how all other pursuits and objects vanished from his mind; how solely he was wrapped in the one wild delusion; with what a sceptre of magic power the despot demon ruled every feeling and every thought. Far more intense than the passion of the gamester was the frantic yet sublime desire that mastered the breast of Glyndon. He would be the rival of Zicci not in human and perishable affections, but in preternatural and eternal lore. He would have laid down life with content, nay rapture, as the price of learning those solemn secrets which separated the stranger from mankind. Such fools are we when we aspire to be overwise! To be enamoured too madly of the goddess of goddesses is only to embrace a cloud, and to forfeit alike heaven and earth.

The night was most lovely and serene, and the waves scarcely rippled at his feet, as the Englishman glided on by the cool and starry beach. At length he arrived at the spot, and there, leaning against the broken pillar, he beheld a man wrapped in a long mantle, and in an attitude of profound repose. He approached and uttered the name of Zicci. The figure turned, and he saw the face of a stranger; a face not stamped by the glorious beauty of the Corsican, but equally majestic in its aspect, and, perhaps, still more impressive from the mature age and the passionless depth of thought that characterised the expanded forehead and deep-set but piercing eyes.

"You seek Zicci," said the stranger; "he will be here anon; but, perhaps, he whom you see before you is more connected with your destiny and more disposed to realise your dreams."

"Hath the earth then another Zicci?"

"If not," replied the stranger, "why do you cherish the hope and the wild faith to be yourself a Zicci? Think you that none others have burned with the same godlike dream? Who, indeed, in his first youth—youth when the soul is nearer to the heaven from which it sprung—and its divine and primal longings are not all effaced by the sordid passions and petty cares that are begot in time?—who is there in youth that has not nourished the belief that the universe has secrets not known to the common herd, and panted, as the hart for the water-springs, for the fountains that lie hid and far away amidst the broad wilderness of trackless science? The music of the fountain is heard in the soul within, till the steps, deceived and erring, rove away from its waters, and the wanderer dies in the mighty desert. Think you that none who have cherished the hope have found the truth? or that the yearning after the Ineffable Knowledge was given to us utterly in vain? No. Every desire in human hearts is but a glimpse of things that exist—alike distant and divine. No! in the world there have been, from age to age, some brighter and happier spirits who have won to the air in which the beings above mankind move and breathe. Zicci, great though he be, stands not alone. He has his predecessors, his contemporary rivals, and long lines of successors are yet to come!"

"And will you tell me," said Glyndon, "that in yourself I behold one of that mighty few over whom Zicci has no superiority in power and wisdom?"

"In me," answered the stranger, "you see one from whom Zicci himself learned many of his loftiest secrets. Before his birth my wisdom was! On these shores—on this spot—have I stood in ages that your chronicles but feebly reach. The Phœnician—the Greek—the Oscan—the

Roman—the Lombard—I have seen them all—leaves gay and glittering on the trunk of the universal life—scattered in due season and again renewed; till, indeed, the same race that gave its glory to the ancient world bestowed a second youth on the new. For the pure Greeks—the Hellenes—whose origin has bewildered your dreaming scholars—were of the same great family as the Norman tribe, born to be the lords of the universe, and in no land on earth destined to be the hewers of wood. Even the dim traditions of the learned that bring the sons of Hellas from the vast and undetermined territories of Northern Thrace, to be the victors of the pastoral Pelasgi, and the founders of the line of demi-gods, might serve you to trace back their primeval settlements to the same region whence, in later times, the Norman warriors broke on the dull and savage hordes of the Celt, and became the Greeks of the Christian world. But this interests you not, and you are wise in your indifference. Not in the knowledge of things without, but in the perfection of the soul within, lies the empire of man aspiring to be more than men."

"And what books contain that science—from what laboratory is it wrought?"

"Nature supplies the materials: they are around you in your daily walks; in the herbs that the beast devours and the chemist disdains to cull; in the elements, from which matter in its meanest and its mightiest shapes is deduced; in the wide bosom of the air; in the black abysses of the earth;—everywhere are given to mortals the resources and libraries of immortal lore. But as the simplest problems in the simplest of all studies are obscure to one who braces not his mind to their comprehension; as the rower in yonder vessel cannot tell you why two circles can touch each other only in one point;—so, though all earth were carved over and inscribed with the letters of diviner knowledge, the characters would be valueless to him who does not pause to inquire the language and meditate the truth. Young man, if thy imagination is vivid, if thy heart is daring, if thy

curiosity is insatiate, I will accept thee as my pupil. But the first lessons are stern and dread."

"If thou hast mastered them, why not I?" answered Glyndon, boldly. "I have felt from my boyhood that strange mysteries were reserved for my career, and from the proudest ends of ordinary ambition I have carried my gaze into the cloud and darkness that stretch beyond. The instant I beheld Zicci, I felt as if I had discovered the guide and the tutor for which my youth had idly languished and vainly burned."

"And to me his duty can be transferred," replied the stranger. "Yonder lies, anchored in the bay, the vessel in which Zicci seeks a fairer home; a little while and the breeze will rise, the sail will swell, and the stranger will have passed like a wind away. Still, like the wind, he leaves in thy heart the seeds that may bear the blossom and the fruit. Zicci hath performed his task—he is wanted no more; the perfecter of his work is at thy side. He comes—I hear the dash of the oar. You will have your choice submitted to you. According as you decide, we shall meet again." With these words the stranger moved slowly away, and disappeared beneath the shadow of the cliffs. A boat glided rapidly across the waters—it touched land, a man leapt on shore, and Glyndon recognised Zicci.

"I give thee, Glyndon, I give thee no more the option of happy love and serene enjoyment. That hour is past, and fate has linked the hand that might have been thine own to mine. But I have ample gifts to bestow upon thee if thou wilt abandon the hope that gnaws thy heart, and the realisation of which even I have not the power toforesee. Be thine ambition human, and I can gratify it to the full. Men desire four things in life—love, wealth, fame, power. The first I cannot give thee—no matter why; the rest are at my disposal. Select which of them thou wilt, and let us part in peace."

"Such are not the gifts I covet: I choose knowledge—which indeed, as the schoolman said, *is* power, and the loftiest—that knowledge must be thine own. For this, and

for this alone, I surrendered the love of Isabel; this, and this alone, must be my recompense."

"I cannot gainsay thee, though I can warn. The desire to learn does not always contain the faculty to acquire. I can give thee, it is true, the teacher, the rest must depend on thee. Be wise in time, and take that which I can assure to thee."

"Answer me but these questions, and according to your answer I will decide. Is it in the power of man to attain intercourse with the beings of other worlds? Is it in the power of man to read the past and the future? and to insure life against the sword, and against disease?"

"All this may be possible," answered Zicci evasively, "to the few. But for one who attains such secrets, millions may perish in the attempt."

"One question more. Thou——"

"Beware! Of myself, as I have said before, I render no account."

"Well, then, the stranger I have met this night—are his boasts to be believed? Is he in truth one of the chosen seers whom you allow to have mastered the mysteries I yearn to fathom?"

"Rash man," said Zicci, in a tone of compassion, "thy crisis is past, and thy choice made. I can only bid thee be bold and prosper. Yes, I resign thee to a master who *has* the power and the will to open to thee the gates of the awful world. Thy weal or woe are as nought in the eyes of his relentless wisdom. I would bid him spare thee, but he will heed me not. Mejnour, receive thy pupil!" Glyndon turned, and his heart beat when he perceived that the stranger, whose footsteps he had not heard on the pebbles, whose approach he had not beheld in the moonlight, was once more by his side.

Glyndon's eyes followed the receding form of the mysterious Corsican. He saw him enter the boat, and he then for the first time noticed that besides the rowers there was a female, who stood up as Zicci gained the boat. Even at

this distance he recognised the once-adored form of Isabel. She waved her hand to him, and across the still and shining air came her voice, mournfully and sweetly in her native tongue, "Farewell, Clarence—farewell, farewell."

He strove to answer, but the voice touched a chord at his heart, and the words failed him. Isabel was then lost for ever—gone with this dread stranger—darkness was round her lot. And he himself had decided her fate and his own. The boat bounded on, the soft waves flashed and sparkled beneath the oars, and it was along one sapphire track of moonlight that the frail vessel bore away the lovers. Farther and farther from his gaze sped the boat, till at last the speck, scarcely visible, touched the side of the ship that lay lifeless in the glorious bay. At that instant, as if by magic, up sprang with a glad murmur the playful and refreshing wind. And Glyndon turned to Mejnour, and broke the silence.

"Tell me—if thou canst read the future—tell me that *her* lot will be fair, and that *her* choice at least is wise."

"My pupil," answered Mejnour, in a voice the calmness of which well accorded with the chilling words, "thy first task must be to withdraw all thought, feeling, sympathy from others. The elementary stage of knowledge is to make self, and self alone, thy study and thy world. Thou hast decided thine own career, thou hast renounced love, thou hast rejected wealth, fame, and the vulgar pomps of power. What, then, are all mankind to thee? To perfect thy faculties and concentrate thy emotions is henceforth thy only aim."

"And will happiness be the end?"

"If happiness exist," answered Mejnour, "it must be centred in A SELF to which all passion is unknown. But happiness is the last state of being, and as yet thou art on the threshold of the first!"

As Mejnour spoke, the distant vessel spread its sails to the wind, and moved slowly along the deep. Glyndon sighed, and the pupil and the master retraced their steps towards the city.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

It was about a month after the date of Zicci's departure and Glyndon's introduction to Mejnour, when two Englishmen were walking arm-in-arm through the Toledo.

"I tell you," said one (who spoke warmly), "that if you have a particle of common sense left in you, you will accompany me to England. This Mejnour is an impostor more dangerous—because more in earnest—than Zicci. After all, what do his promises amount to? You allow that nothing can be more equivocal. You say that he has left Naples—that he has selected a retreat more genial than the crowded thoroughfares of men to the studies in which he is to initiate you; and this retreat is among the haunts of the fiercest bandits of Italy,—haunts which Justice itself dare not penetrate:—fitting hermitage for a sage! I tremble for you. What if this stranger, of whom nothing is known, be leagued with the robbers; and these lures for your credulity bait but the traps for your property—perhaps your life? You might come off cheaply by a ransom of half your fortune: you smile indignantly;—well! put common sense out of the question: take your own view of the matter. You are to undergo an ordeal which Mejnour himself does not profess to describe as a very tempting one. It may, or it may not, succeed; if it does not, you are menaced with the darkest evils; and if it does, you cannot be better off than the dull and joyless mystic whom you have taken for a master. Away with this folly! Enjoy youth while it is left to you. Return with me to England:

forget these dreams. Enter your proper career; form affections more respectable than those which lured you awhile to an Italian adventuress, and become a happy and distinguished man. This is the advice of sober friendship; yet the promises I hold out to you are fairer than those of Mejnour."

"Merton," said Glyndon, doggedly, "I cannot, if I would, yield to your wishes. A power that is above me urges me on: I cannot resist its fascination. I will proceed to the last in the strange career I have commenced. Think of me no more. Follow yourself the advice you give to me—and be happy."

"This is madness," said Merton, passionately, but with a tear in his eye; "your health is already failing; you are so changed I should scarcely know you;—come—I have already had your name entered in my passport: in another hour I shall be gone, and you, boy that you are, will be left without a friend to the deceits of your own fancy, and the machinations of this relentless mountebank."

"Enough," said Glyndon, coldly; "you cease to be an effective counsellor when you suffer your prejudices to be thus evident. I have already had ample proof," added the Englishman, and his pale cheek grew more pale, "of the power of this man—if man he be, which I sometimes doubt—and, come life, come death, I will not shrink from the paths that allure me. Farewell, Merton—if we never meet again;—if you hear amidst our old and cheerful haunts that Clarence Glyndon sleeps the last sleep by the shores of Naples, or amidst the Calabrian hills—say to the friends of our youth, 'He died worthily, as thousands of martyr-students have died before him, in the pursuit of knowledge.'"

He wrung Merton's hand as he spoke, darted from his side, and disappeared amidst the crowd.

That day Merton left Naples: the next morning Glyndon also quitted the City of Delight, alone and on horseback. He bent his way into those picturesque but danger-

ous parts of the country, which at that time were infested by banditti, and which few travellers dared to pass, even in broad daylight, without a strong escort. A road more lonely cannot well be conceived than that on which the hoofs of his steed, striking upon the fragments of rock that encumbered the neglected way, woke a dull and melancholy echo. Large tracts of waste land, varied by the rank and profuse foliage of the South, lay before him: occasionally a wild goat peeped down from some rocky crag, or the discordant cry of a bird of prey, startled in its sombre haunt, was heard above the hills. These were the only signs of life; not a human being was met—not a hut was visible. Wrapped in his own ardent and solemn thoughts, the young man continued his way, till the sun had spent its noon-day heat, and a breeze that announced the approach of eve sprung up from the unseen ocean that lay far distant to his sight. It was then that a turn in the road brought before him one of those long, desolate, gloomy villages which are found in the interior of the Neapolitan dominions;—and now he came upon a small chapel on one side of the road, with a gaudily-painted image of the Virgin in the open shrine. Around this spot, which in the heart of a Christian land retained the vestige of the old idolatry (for just such were the chapels that in the Pagan age were dedicated to the demon-saints of mythology), gathered six or seven miserable and squalid wretches, whom the Curse of the Leper had cut off from mankind. They set up a shrill cry as they turned their ghastly visages towards the horseman; and without stirring from the spot, stretched out their gaunt arms, and implored charity in the name of the Merciful Mother. Glyndon hastily threw them some small coins, and, turning away his face, clapped spurs to his horse, and relaxed not his speed till he entered the village. On either side the narrow and miry street, fierce and haggard forms—some leaning against the ruined walls of blackened huts—some seated at the threshold—some lying at full length in the mud—presented groups that at once

invoked pity and aroused alarm; pity for their squalor—alarm for the ferocity imprinted on their savage aspects. They gazed at him, grim and sullen, as he rode slowly up the rugged street; sometimes whispering significantly to each other, but without attempting to stop his way. Even the children hushed their babble, and ragged urchins, devouring him with sparkling eyes, muttered to their mothers, "We shall feast well to-morrow!" It was, indeed, one of those hamlets in which Law sets not its sober step—in which Violence and Murder house secure—hamlets common then in the wilder parts of Italy—in which the peasant was but the gentler name for the robber.

Glyndon's heart somewhat failed him as he looked around, and the question he desired to ask died upon his lips. At length, from one of the dismal cabins emerged a form superior to the rest. Instead of the patched and ragged overall which made the only garment of the men he had hitherto seen, the dress of this person was characterised by all the trappings of Calabrian bravery. Upon his raven hair, the glossy curls of which made a notable contrast to the matted and elfin locks of the savages around, was placed a cloth cap with a gold tassel that hung down to his shoulder; his moustaches were trimmed with care, and a silk kerchief of gay hues was twisted round a well-shaped but sinewy throat; a short jacket of rough cloth was decorated with several rows of gilt filigree buttons; his nether garments fitted tight to his limbs, and were curiously braided; while in a broad parti-coloured sash were placed four silver-hilted pistols; and the sheathed knife, usually worn by Italians of the lower order, was mounted in ivory elaborately carved. A small carbine of handsome workmanship was slung across his shoulder, and completed his costume. The man himself was of middle size, athletic, yet slender—with straight and regular features—sunburnt, but not swarthy; and an expression of countenance which, though reckless and bold, had in it frankness rather than ferocity, and, if defying, was not altogether unprepossessing.

Glyndon, after eyeing this figure for some moments with great attention, checked his rein, and asked in the provincial *patois*, with which he was tolerably familiar, the way to the "Castle of the Mountain."

The man lifted his cap as he heard the question, and approaching Glyndon, laid his hand upon the neck of the horse, and said in a low voice, "Then you are the cavalier whom our patron the signor expected. He bade me wait for you here, and lead you to the castle. And indeed, signor, it might have been unfortunate if I had neglected to obey the command."

The man then, drawing a little aside, called out to the bystanders in a loud voice, "Ho, ho, my friends, pay henceforth and for ever all respect to this worshipful cavalier. He is the accepted guest of our blessed patron of the Castle of the Mountain. Long life to him! May he, like his host, be safe by day and by night; in the hill and on the waste; against the dagger and the bullet; in limb and in life! Cursed be he who touches a hair of his head, or a baioccho in his pouch. Now and for ever we will protect and honour him—for the law or against the law—with the faith, and to the death. Amen. Amen!"

"Amen!" responded in wild chorus a hundred voices, and the scattered and straggling groups pressed up the street, nearer and nearer to the horseman.

"And that he may be known," continued the Englishman's strange protector, "to the eye and to the ear, I place around him the white sash, and I give him the sacred watchword—'*Peace to the Brave.*' Signor, when you wear this sash, the proudest in these parts will bare the head and bend the knee. Signor, when you utter this watchword, the bravest hearts will be bound to your bidding. Desire you safety, or ask you revenge—to gain a beauty, or to lose a foe—speak but the word and we are yours, we are yours! Is it not so, comrades?" And again the hoarse voices shouted, "Amen, amen!"

"Now, signor," whispered the bravo, in good Italian, "if

you have a few coins to spare, scatter them amongst the crowd, and let us be gone."

Glyndon, not displeased at the concluding sentence, emptied his purse in the street; and while, with mingled oaths, blessings, shrieks, and yells, men, women, and children scrambled for the money, the bravo, taking the rein of the horse, led it a few paces through the village at a brisk trot, and then turning up a narrow lane to the left, in a few minutes neither houses nor men were visible, and the mountains closed their path on either side. It was then that, releasing the bridle and slackening his pace, the guide turned his dark eyes on Glyndon with an arch expression, and said:

"Your Excellency was not, perhaps, prepared for the hearty welcome we have given you."

"Why, in truth, I *ought* to have been prepared for it, since my friend, to whose house I am bound, did not disguise from me the character of the neighbourhood. And your name, my friend, if I may call you so?"

"Oh, no ceremonies with me, Excellency. In the village, I am generally called Maestro Paulo. I had a surname once, though a very equivocal one—and I have forgotten that since I retired from the world."

"And was it from disgust, from poverty, or from some—some ebullition of passion which entailed punishment—that you betook yourself to the mountains?"

"Why, signor," said the bravo, with a gay laugh, "hermits of my class seldom love the confessional. However, I have no secrets while my step is in these defiles, my whistle in my pouch, and my carbine at my back." With that the robber, as if he loved permission to talk at his will, hemmed thrice, and began with much humour; though, as his tale proceeded, the memories it roused seemed to carry him farther than he at first intended, and reckless and light-hearted ease gave way to that fierce and varied play of countenance and passion of gesture which characterise the emotions of his countrymen.

"I was born at Terracina—a fair spot, is it not? My father was a learned monk, of high birth; my mother—Heaven rest her!—an innkeeper's pretty daughter. Of course there was no marriage in the case; and when I was born, the monk gravely declared my appearance to be miraculous. I was dedicated from my cradle to the altar—and my head was universally declared to be the orthodox shape for a cowl. As I grew up, the monk took great pains with my education, and I learned Latin and psalmody as soon as less miraculous infants learn crowing. Nor did the holy man's care stint itself to my interior accomplishments. Although vowed to poverty, he always contrived that my mother should have her pockets full; and between her pockets and mine there was soon established a clandestine communication; accordingly, at fourteen, I wore my cap on one side, stuck pistols in my belt, and assumed the swagger of a cavalier and a gallant. At that age, my poor mother died; and about the same period, my father, having written a 'History of the Pontifical Bulls,' in forty volumes, and being, as I said, of high birth, obtained a cardinal's hat. From that time he thought fit to disown your humble servant. He bound me over to an honest notary at Naples, and gave me two hundred crowns by way of provision. Well, signor, I saw enough of the law to convince me that I should never be rogue enough to shine in the profession. So instead of spoiling parchment, I made love to the notary's daughter. My master discovered our innocent amusement, and turned me out of doors—that was disagreeable. But my Ninetta loved me, and took care that I should not lie out in the streets with the lazzaroni. Little jade, I think I see her now, with her bare feet, and her finger to her lips, opening the door in the summer nights, and bidding me creep softly into the kitchen, where—praised be the saints!—a flask and a manchet always awaited the hungry amoroso. At last, however, Ninetta grew cold. It is the way of the sex, signor. Her father found her an excellent marriage in the person of a withered picture-dealer. She

took the spouse, and very properly clapped the door in the face of the lover. I was not disheartened, Excellency; no, not I. Women are plentiful while we are young. So, without a ducat in my pocket, or a crust for my teeth, I set out to seek my fortune on board of a Spanish merchantman. That was duller work than I expected; but luckily we were attacked by a pirate—half the crew were butchered, the rest captured. I was one of the last—always in luck, you see, signor, monk's sons have a knack that way! The captain of the pirate took a fancy to me. 'Serve with us,' said he. 'Too happy,' said I. Behold me then a pirate. O jolly life! how I blest the old notary for turning me out of doors! What feasting—what fighting—what wooing—what quarrelling. Sometimes we ran ashore and enjoyed ourselves like princes; sometimes we lay in a calm for days together, on the loveliest sea that man ever traversed. And then, if the breeze rose, and a sail came in sight, who so merry as we? I passed three years in that charming profession, and then, signor, I grew ambitious. I caballed against the captain—I wanted his post. One still night we struck the blow. The ship was like a log in the sea—no land to be seen from the mast-head, the waves like glass, and the moon at its full. Up we rose—thirty of us and more. Up we rose with a shout; we poured into the captain's cabin. I at the head. The brave old boy had caught the alarm, and there he stood at the doorway, a pistol in each hand—and his one eye (he had only one) worse to meet than the pistols were.

"'Yield,' cried I, 'your life shall be safe.'

"'Take that,' said he, 'and whizz went the pistol: but the saints took care of their own, and the ball passed by my cheek, and shot the boatswain behind me. I closed with the captain, and the other pistol went off without mischief in the struggle: such a fellow he was, six feet four without his shoes! Over we went—rolling each on the other. Santa Maria!—no time to get hold of one's knife. Meanwhile, all the crew were up, some for the captain, some for

me—clashing and firing, and swearing and groaning, and now and then a heavy splash in the sea! Fine supper for the sharks that night! At last old Bilboa got uppermost: out flashed his knife; down it came, but not in my heart. No! I gave my left arm as a shield, and the blade went through and through up to the hilt, with the blood spirting up like the rain from a whale's nostril. With the weight of the blow the stout fellow came down, so that his face touched mine; with my right hand I caught him by the throat, turned him over like a lamb, signor, and faith it was soon all up with him: the boatswain's brother, a fat Dutchman, ran him through with a pike.

"'Old fellow,' said I, as he turned up his terrible eye to me, 'I bear you no malice, but we must try to get on in the world, you know.' The captain grinned and gave up the ghost. I went upon deck—what a sight! Twenty bold fellows stark and cold, and the moon sparkling on the puddles of blood as calmly as if it were water. Well, signor, the victory was ours, and the ship mine: I ruled merrily enough for six months. We then attacked a French ship twice our size; what sport it was! And we had not had a good fight so long: we were quite like virgins at it! We got the best of it, and won ship and cargo. They wanted to pistol the captain; but that was against my laws; so we gagged him, for he scolded as loud as if we were married to him: left him and the rest of his crew on board our own vessel, which was terribly battered; clapped our black flag on the Frenchman's, and set off merrily, with a brisk wind in our favour. But luck deserted us on forsaking our own dear old ship. A storm came on—a plank struck—several of us escaped in the boats: we had lots of gold with us, but no water. For two days and two nights we suffered horribly; but at last we ran ashore near a French seaport: our sorry plight moved compassion, and as we had money we were not suspected: people only suspect the poor. Here we soon recovered our fatigues, rigged ourselves out gaily, and your humble servant was considered as noble a

captain as ever walked deck. But now, alas, my fate would have it that I should fall in love with a silk-mercer's daughter. Ah! how I loved her—the pretty Clara! Yes, I loved her so well, that I was seized with horror at my past life; I resolved to repent—to marry her—and settle down into an honest man. Accordingly, I summoned my messmates, told them my resolution, resigned my command, and persuaded them to depart. They were good fellows; engaged with a Dutchman, against whom I heard afterwards they made a successful mutiny, but I never saw them more. I had two thousand crowns still left; with this sum I obtained the consent of the silk-mercer, and it was agreed that I should become a partner in the firm. I need not say that no one suspected I had been so great a man, and I passed for a Neapolitan goldsmith's son instead of a cardinal's. I was very happy then, signor, very—I could not have harmed a fly. Had I married Clara I had been as gentle a mercer as ever handled a measure."

The bravo paused a moment, and it was easy to see that he felt more than his words and tone betokened. "Well, well, we must not look back at the Past too earnestly,—the sunlight upon it makes one's eyes water. The day was fixed for our wedding—it approached. on the evening before the appointed day, Clara, her mother, her little sister and myself, were walking by the port, and as we looked on the sea I was telling them old gossip tales of mermaids and sea-serpents:—when a red-faced bottle-nosed Frenchman clapped himself right before me, and placing his spectacles very deliberately astride his proboscis, echoed out, '*Sacré, mille tonnerres!* This is the damned pirate that boarded the *Niobe!*'

"'None of your jests,' said I, mildly. 'Ho, ho,' said he. 'I can't be mistaken. Help there,' and he gripped me by the collar. I replied, as you may suppose, by laying him in the kennel; but it would not do. The French captain had a French lieutenant at his back, whose memory was as good as his master's. A crowd assembled—other sailors

came up—the odds were against me; I slept that night in prison; and, in a few weeks afterwards, I was sent to the galleys. They had spared my life because the old Frenchman politely averred that I had made my crew spare his. You may believe that the oar and the chain were not to my taste. I and two others escaped; they took to the road, and have, no doubt, been long since broken on the wheel. I, soft soul, would not commit another crime to gain my bread, for Clara was still at my heart with her soft eyes; so, limiting my rogueries to the theft of a beggar's rags, which I compensated him by leaving my galley attire instead, I begged my way to the town where I left Clara. It was a clear winter's day when I approached the outskirts of the town. I had no fear of detection, for my beard and hair were as good as a mask. Oh, Mother of Mercy! there came across my way a funeral procession! There, now, you know it. I can tell you no more. She had died, perhaps of love, more likely of shame. Do you know how I spent that night? I will tell you:—I stole a pickaxe from a mason's shed, and, all alone and unseen, under the frosty heavens I dug the fresh mould from the grave,—I lifted the coffin,—I wrenched the lid,—I saw her again—again. Decay had not touched her. She was always pale in her life!—I could have sworn she lived!—It was a blessed thing to see her once more,—and all alone too! But then at dawn, to give her back to the earth,—to close the lid, to throw down the mould, to hear the pebbles rattle on the coffin,—that was dreadful! Signor, I never knew before, and I don't wish to think now, how valuable a thing human life is. At sunrise I was again a wanderer; but now, that Clara was gone, my scruples vanished, and again I was at war with my betters. I contrived, at last, at O——, to get taken on board a vessel bound to Leghorn, working out my passage. From Leghorn I went to Rome, and stationed myself at the door of the cardinal's palace. Out he came,—his gilded coach at the gate.

"'Ho, father,' said I, 'don't you know me?'

"'Who are you?'

"'Your son,' said I, in a whisper.

"The cardinal drew back, looked at me earnestly, and mused a moment. 'All men are my sons,' quoth he then, very mildly, 'there is gold for thee. To him who begs once, alms are due; to him who begs twice, jails are open. Take the hint, and molest me no more. Heaven bless thee!' With that he got into his coach, and drove off to the Vatican. His purse, which he had left behind, was well supplied. I was grateful and contented, and took my way to Terracina. I had not long passed the marshes, when I saw two horsemen approach at a canter.

"'You look poor, friend,' said one of them, halting; 'yet you are strong.'

"'Poor men and strong are both serviceable and dangerous, Signor Cavalier.'

"'Well said—follow us.'

"I obeyed and became a bandit. I rose by degrees; and as I have always been mild in my calling, and have taken purses without cutting throats, bear an excellent character, and can eat my macaroni at Naples without any danger to life and limbs. For the last two years I have settled in these parts, where I hold sway, and where I have purchased land. I am called a farmer, signor; and I myself now only rob for amusement, and to keep my hand in. I trust I have satisfied your curiosity. We are within a hundred yards of the castle."

"And how," asked the Englishman, whose interest had been much excited by his companion's narrative, "and how came you acquainted with my host? and by what means has he so well conciliated the goodwill of yourself and your friends?"

Maestro Paulo turned his black eyes gravely towards his questioner. "Why, signor," said he, "you must surely know more of the foreign cavalier with the hard name than I do. All I can say is, that about a fortnight ago I chanced to be standing by a booth in the Toledo at Naples, when a

sober-looking gentleman touched me by the arm, and said, 'Maestro Paulo, I want to make your acquaintance; do me the favour to come into yonder tavern.' When we were seated, my new acquaintance thus accosted me: 'The Count d'O—— has offered to let me hire his old castle near B——. You know the spot?'

"Extremely well; no one has inhabited it for a century at least; it is half in ruins, signor. A queer place to hire—I hope the rent is not heavy.'

"'Maestro Paulo,' said he, 'I am a philosopher, and won't care for luxuries. I want a quiet retreat for some scientific experiments. The castle will suit me very well, provided you will accept me as a neighbour, and place me and my friends under your special protection. I am rich; but I shall take nothing to the castle worth robbing. I will pay one rent to the count, and another to you.'

"With that we soon came to terms, and as the strange signor doubled the sum I myself proposed, he is in high favour with all his neighbours. We would guard the old castle against an army. And now, signor, that I have been thus frank, be frank with me. Who is this singular cavalier?"

"Who?—he himself told you, a philosopher."

"Hem! Searching for the philosopher's stone, eh? A bit of a magician;—afraid of the priests?"

"Precisely. You have hit it."

"I thought so; and you are his pupil?"

"I am."

"I wish you well through it," said the robber, seriously, and crossing himself with much devotion: "I am not much better than other people, but one's soul is one's soul. I do not mind a little honest robbery, or knocking a man on the head if need be—but to make a bargain with the Devil!—Ah! take care, young gentleman, take care."

"You need not fear," said Glyndon, smiling; "my preceptor is too wise and too good for such a compact. But

here we are, I suppose. A noble ruin! A glorious prospect."

Glyndon paused delightedly, and surveyed the scene before and below with the eye of a poet and a painter. Insensibly, while listening to the bandit, he had wound up a considerable ascent, and now he was upon a broad ledge of rock covered with mosses and dwarf shrubs. Between this eminence and another of equal height, upon which the castle was built, there was a deep but narrow fissure, overgrown with the most profuse foliage, so that the eye could not penetrate many yards below the rugged surface of the abyss; but the profoundness might well be conjectured by the hoarse, low, monotonous sound of waters unseen that rolled below, and the subsequent course of which was visible at a distance in a perturbed and rapid stream that intersected the waste and desolate valleys. To the left, the prospect seemed almost boundless;—the extreme clearness of the purple air serving to render distinct the features of a range of country that a conqueror of old might have deemed in itself a kingdom. Lonely and desolate as the road which Glyndon had passed that day had appeared, the landscape now seemed studded with castles, spires, and villages. Afar off, Naples gleamed whitely in the last rays of the sun, and the rose-tints of the horizon melted into the azure of her glorious bay. Yet more remote, and in another part of the prospect, might be caught, dim and shadowy, and backed by the darkest foliage, the ruined village of the ancient Poseidonia. There, in the midst of his blackened and sterile realms, rose the dismal Mount of Fire; while, on the other hand, winding through variegated plains, to which distance lent all its magic, glittered many a stream, by which Etruscan and Sybarite, Roman, and Saracen, and Norman had, at intervals of ages, pitched the invading tent. All the visions of the past—the stormy and dazzling histories of Southern Italy—rushed over the artist's mind as he gazed below. And then, slowly turning to look behind, he saw the grey and mouldering walls of the castle in which he

sought the secrets that were to give to hope in the Future a mightier empire than memory owns in the Past. It was one of those baronial fortresses with which Italy was studded in the earlier middle ages, having but little of the Gothic grace of grandeur which belongs to the ecclesiastical architecture of the same time; but rude, vast, and menacing even in decay. A wooden bridge was thrown over the chasm, wide enough to admit two horsemen abreast; and the planks trembled and gave back a hollow sound as Glyndon urged his jaded steed across.

A road that had once been broad, and paved with rough flags, but which now was half obliterated by long grass and rank weeds, conducted to the outer court of the castle hard by; the gates were open, and half the building in this part was dismantled, the ruins partially hid by ivy that was the growth of centuries. But on entering the inner court, Glyndon was not sorry to notice that there was less appearance of neglect and decay: some wild roses gave a smile to the grey walls, and in the centre there was a fountain, in which the waters still trickled coolly, and with a pleasing murmur, from the jaws of a gigantic triton. Here he was met by Mejnour with a smile.

"Welcome, my friend and pupil," said he; "he who seeks for Truth can find in these solitudes an immortal Academe."

CHAPTER II.

The attendants which Mejnour had engaged for his strange abode were such as might suit a philosopher of few wants. An old Armenian, whom Glyndon recognised as in the mystic's service at Naples; a tall, hard-featured woman from the village, recommended by Maestro Paulo; and two long-haired, smooth-spoken, but fierce-visaged youths, from the same place, and honoured by the same sponsorship, constituted the establishment. The rooms used by the sage

were commodious and weatherproof, with some remains of ancient splendour in the faded arras that clothed the walls and the huge tables of costly marble and elaborate carving. Glyndon's sleeping apartment communicated with a kind of belvidere or terrace that commanded prospects of unrivalled beauty and extent, and was separated, on the other side, by a long gallery and a flight of ten or a dozen stairs, from the private chambers of the mystic. There was about the whole place a sombre, and yet not displeasing, depth of repose. It suited well with the studies to which it was now to be appropriated.

For several days Mejnour refused to confer with Glyndon on the subjects nearest to his heart.

"All without," said he, "is prepared, but not all within. Your own soul must grow accustomed to the spot, and filled with the surrounding Nature—for Nature is the source of all inspiration."

With these words, which savoured a little of jargon, Mejnour turned to lighter topics. He made the Englishman accompany him in long rambles through the wild scenes around, and he smiled approvingly when the young artist gave way to the enthusiasm which their fearful beauty could not have failed to rouse in a duller breast; and then Mejnour poured forth to his wondering pupil the stores of a knowledge that seemed inexhaustible and boundless. He gave accounts the most curious, graphic, and minute, of the various races, their characters, habits, creeds, and manners, by which that fair land had been successively overrun. It is true that his descriptions could not be found in books, and were unsupported by learned authorities, but he possessed the true charm of the tale-teller, and spoke of all with the animated confidence of a personal witness. Sometimes, too, he would converse upon the more durable and the loftier mysteries of Nature with an eloquence and a research which invested them with all the colours rather of poetry than science. Insensibly the young artist found himself elevated and soothed by the lore of his companion;

the fever of his wild desires was slaked. His mind became more and more lulled into the divine tranquillity of contemplation; he felt himself a nobler being; and in the silence of his senses he imagined that he heard the voice of his soul.

It was to this state that Mejnour sought to bring the Neophyte, and in this elementary initiation the mystic was like every more ordinary sage. For he who seeks to discover must first reduce himself into a kind of abstract idealism, and be rendered up, in solemn and sweet bondage, to the faculties which contemplate and imagine.

Glyndon noticed that, in their rambles, Mejnour often paused where the foliage was rifest, to gather some herb or flower; and this reminded him that he had seen Zicci similarly occupied. "Can these humble children of Nature," (said he one day to Mejnour), "things that bloom and wither in a day, be serviceable to the science of the higher secrets? Is there a pharmacy for the soul as well as the body, and do the nurslings of the summer minister not only to human health but spiritual immortality?"

"If," answered Mejnour, "before one property of herbalism was known to them, a stranger had visited a wandering tribe, if he had told the savages that the herbs, which every day they trampled underfoot, were endowed with the most potent virtues; that one would restore to health a brother on the verge of death; that another would paralyse into idiocy their wisest sage; that a third would strike lifeless to the dust their most stalwart champion; that tears and laughter, vigour and disease, madness and reason, wakefulness and sleep, existence and dissolution, were coiled up in those unregarded leaves,—would they not have held him a sorcerer or a liar? To half the virtues of the vegetable world mankind are yet in the darkness of the savages I have supposed. There are faculties within us with which certain herbs have affinity, and over which they have power. The moly of the ancients was not all a fable."

One evening, Glyndon had lingered alone and late upon

the ramparts,—watching the stars as, one by one, they broke upon the twilight. Never had he felt so sensibly the mighty power of the heavens and the earth upon man! how much the springs of our intellectual being are moved and acted upon by the solemn influences of Nature! As a patient on whom, slowly and by degrees, the agencies of mesmerism are brought to bear, he acknowledged to his heart the growing force of that vast and universal magnetism which is the life of creation, and binds the atom to the whole. A strange and ineffable consciousness of power, of the something great within the perishable clay, appealed to feelings at once dim and glorious,—rather faintly recognised than all unknown. An impulse that he could not resist led him to seek the mystic. He would demand, that hour, his initiation into the worlds beyond our world—he was prepared to breathe a diviner air. He entered the castle, and strode through the shadowy and star-lit gallery which conducted to Mejnour's apartment.

THE END.

[[1] So far as Zicci was ever finished.]

THE HAUNTED AND THE HAUNTERS;

OR,

THE HOUSE AND THE BRAIN

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A FRIEND of mine, who is a man of letters and a philosopher, said to me one day, as if between jest and earnest: "Fancy! since we last met, I have discovered a haunted house in the midst of London."

"Really haunted?—and by what?—ghosts?"

"Well, I can't answer that question; all I know is this: six weeks ago my wife and I were in search of a furnished apartment. Passing a quiet street, we saw on the window of one of the houses a bill, 'Apartments, Furnished.' The situation suited us: we entered the house—liked the rooms—engaged them by the week—and left them the third day. No power on earth could have reconciled my wife to stay longer; and I don't wonder at it."

"What did you see?"

"Excuse me—I have no desire to be ridiculed as a superstitious dreamer—nor, on the other hand, could I ask you to accept on my affirmation what you would hold to be incredible without the evidence of your own senses. Let me only say this, it was not so much what we saw or heard (in which you might fairly suppose that we were the dupes of our own excited fancy, or the victims of imposture in others) that drove us away, as it was an undefinable terror which seized both of us whenever we passed by the door of a certain unfurnished room, in which we neither saw nor

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heard anything. And the strangest marvel of all was, that for once in my life I agreed with my wife, silly woman though she be—and allowed, after the third night, that it was impossible to stay a fourth in that house. Accordingly, on the fourth morning I summoned the woman who kept the house and attended on us, and told her that the rooms did not quite suit us, and we would not stay out our week. She said, dryly: 'I know why; you have stayed longer than any other lodger. Few ever stayed a second night; none before you a third. But I take it they have been very kind to you.'

"'They—who?' I asked, affecting to smile.

"'Why, they who haunt the house, whoever they are. I don't mind them; I remember them many years ago, when I lived in this house, not as a servant; but I know they will be the death of me some day. I don't care—I'm old, and must die soon anyhow; and then I shall be with them, and in this house still.' The woman spoke with so dreary a calmness, that really it was a sort of awe that prevented my conversing with her further. I paid for my week, and too happy were my wife and I to get off so cheaply."

"You excite my curiosity," said I; "nothing I should like better than to sleep in a haunted house. Pray give me the address of the one which you left so ignominiously."

My friend gave me the address; and when we parted, I walked straight towards the house thus indicated.

It is situated on the north side of Oxford Street, in a dull but respectable thoroughfare. I found the house shut up—no bill at the window, and no response to my knock. As I was turning away, a beer-boy, collecting pewter pots at the neighbouring areas, said to me, "Do you want any one at that house, sir?"

"Yes, I heard it was to be let."

"Let!—why, the woman who kept it is dead—has been dead these three weeks, and no one can be found to stay there, though Mr. J—— offered ever so much. He offered

mother, who chars for him, 1*l.* a week just to open and shut the windows, and she would not."

"Would not!—and why?"

"The house is haunted; and the old woman who kept it was found dead in her bed, with her eyes wide open. They say the devil strangled her."

"Pooh!—you speak of Mr. J——. Is he the owner of the house?"

"Yes."

"Where does he live?"

"In G—— Street, No. —."

"What is he?—in any business?"

"No, sir—nothing particular; a single gentleman."

I gave the pot-boy the gratuity earned by his liberal information, and proceeded to Mr. J——, in G—— Street, which was close by the street that boasted the haunted house. I was lucky enough to find Mr. J—— at home—an elderly man, with intelligent countenance and prepossessing manners.

I communicated my name and my business frankly. I said I heard the house was considered to be haunted—that I had a strong desire to examine a house with so equivocal a reputation—that I should be greatly obliged if he would allow me to hire it, though only for a night. I was willing to pay for that privilege whatever he might be inclined to ask. "Sir," said Mr. J——, with great courtesy, "the house is at your service, for as short or as long a time as you please. Rent is out of the question—the obligation will be on my side should you be able to discover the cause of the strange phenomena which at present deprive it of all value. I cannot let it, for I cannot even get a servant to keep it in order or answer the door. Unluckily the house is haunted, if I may use that expression, not only by night, but by day; though at night the disturbances are of a more unpleasant and sometimes of a more alarming character. The poor old woman who died in it three weeks ago was a pauper whom I took out of a workhouse, for in her child-

hood she had been known to some of my family, and had once been in such good circumstances that she had rented that house of my uncle. She was a woman of superior education and strong mind, and was the only person I could ever induce to remain in the house. Indeed, since her death, which was sudden, and the coroner's inquest, which gave it a notoriety in the neighbourhood, I have so despaired of finding any person to take charge of the house, much more a tenant, that I would willingly let it rent free for a year to any one who would pay its rates and taxes."

"How long is it since the house acquired this sinister character?"

"That I can scarcely tell you, but very many years since. The old woman I spoke of said it was haunted when she rented it between thirty and forty years ago. The fact is, that my life has been spent in the East Indies, and in the civil service of the Company. I returned to England last year, on inheriting the fortune of an uncle, among whose possessions was the house in question. I found it shut up and uninhabited. I was told that it was haunted, that no one would inhabit it. I smiled at what seemed to me so idle a story. I spent some money in repairing it—added to its old-fashioned furniture a few modern articles—advertised it, and obtained a lodger for a year. He was a colonel on half-pay. He came in with his family, a son and a daughter, and four or five servants: they all left the house the next day; and, although each of them declared that he had seen something different from that which had scared the others, a something still was equally terrible to all. I really could not in conscience sue, nor even blame, the colonel for breach of agreement. Then I put in the old woman I have spoken of, and she was empowered to let the house in apartments. I never had one lodger who stayed more than three days. I do not tell you their stories—to no two lodgers have there been exactly the same phenomena repeated. It is better that you should judge for yourself, than enter the house with an imagination influenced by

previous narratives; only be prepared to see and to hear something or other, and take whatever precautions you yourself please."

"Have you never had a curiosity yourself to pass a night in that house?"

"Yes. I passed not a night, but three hours in broad daylight alone in that house. My curiosity is not satisfied, but it is quenched. I have no desire to renew the experiment. You cannot complain, you see, sir, that I am not sufficiently candid; and unless your interest be exceedingly eager and your nerves unusually strong, I honestly add, that I advise you *not* to pass a night in that house."

"My interest *is* exceedingly keen," said I, "and though only a coward will boast of his nerves in situations wholly unfamiliar to him, yet my nerves have been seasoned in such variety of danger that I have the right to rely on them —even in a haunted house."

Mr. J—— said very little more; he took the keys of the house out of his bureau, gave them to me,—and, thanking him cordially for his frankness, and his urbane concession to my wish, I carried off my prize.

Impatient for the experiment, as soon as I reached home, I summoned my confidential servant—a young man of gay spirits, fearless temper, and as free from superstitious prejudice as any one I could think of.

"F——," said I, "you remember in Germany how disappointed we were at not finding a ghost in that old castle, which was said to be haunted by a headless apparition? Well, I have heard of a house in London which, I have reason to hope, is decidedly haunted. I mean to sleep there to-night. From what I hear, there is no doubt that something will allow itself to be seen or to be heard—something, perhaps, excessively horrible. Do you think, if I take you with me, I may rely on your presence of mind, whatever may happen?"

"Oh, sir! pray trust me," answered F——, grinning with delight.

"Very well; then here are the keys of the house—this is the address. Go now,—select for me any bedroom you please; and since the house has not been inhabited for weeks, make up a good fire—air the bed well—see, of course, that there are candles as well as fuel. Take with you my revolver and my dagger—so much for my weapons—arm yourself equally well; and if we are not a match for a dozen ghosts, we shall be but a sorry couple of Englishmen."

I was engaged for the rest of the day on business so urgent that I had not leisure to think much on the nocturnal adventure to which I had plighted my honour. I dined alone, and very late, and while dining, read, as is my habit. I selected one of the volumes of Macaulay's essays. I thought to myself that I would take the book with me; there was so much of healthfulness in the style, and practical life in the subjects, that it would serve as an antidote against the influences of superstitious fancy.

Accordingly, about half-past nine, I put the book into my pocket, and strolled leisurely towards the haunted house. I took with me a favourite dog,—an exceedingly sharp, bold, and vigilant bull-terrier,—a dog fond of prowling about strange ghostly corners and passages at night in search of rats—a dog of dogs for a ghost.

It was a summer night, but chilly, the sky somewhat gloomy and overcast. Still there was a moon—faint and sickly, but still a moon—and if the clouds permitted, after midnight it would be brighter.

I reached the house, knocked, and my servant opened with a cheerful smile.

"All right, sir, and very comfortable."

"Oh!" said I, rather disappointed; "have you not seen nor heard anything remarkable?"

"Well, sir, I must own I have heard something queer."

"What?—what?"

"The sound of feet pattering behind me; and once or twice small noises like whispers close at my ear—nothing more."

"You are not at all frightened?"

"I! not a bit of it, sir;" and the man's bold look reassured me on one point—viz., that happen what might, he would not desert me.

We were in the hall, the street-door closed, and my attention was now drawn to my dog. He had at first run in eagerly enough, but had sneaked back to the door, and was scratching and whining to get out. After patting him on the head, and encouraging him gently, the dog seemed to reconcile himself to the situation, and followed me and F—— through the house, but keeping close at my heels instead of hurrying inquisitively in advance, which was his usual and normal habit in all strange places. We first visited the subterranean apartments, the kitchen and other offices, and especially the cellars, in which last there were two or three bottles of wine still left in a bin, covered with cobwebs, and evidently, by their appearance, undisturbed for many years. It was clear that the ghosts were not wine-bibbers. For the rest we discovered nothing of interest. There was a gloomy little back-yard, with very high walls. The stones of this yard were very damp; and what with the damp, and what with the dust and smoke-grime on the pavement, our feet left a slight impression where we passed. And now appeared the first strange phenomenon witnessed by myself in this strange abode. I saw, just before me, the print of a foot suddenly form itself, as it were. I stopped, caught hold of my servant, and pointed to it. In advance of that footprint as suddenly dropped another. We both saw it. I advanced quickly to the place; the footprint kept advancing before me, a small footprint;—the foot of a child: the impression was too faint thoroughly to distinguish the shape, but it seemed to us both that it was the print of a naked foot. This phenomenon ceased when we arrived at the opposite wall, nor did it repeat itself on returning. We remounted the stairs, and entered the rooms on the ground floor, a dining parlour, a small back-parlour, and a still smaller third room that had been prob-

ably appropriated to a footman—all still as death. We then visited the drawing-rooms, which seemed fresh and new. In the front room I seated myself in an arm-chair. F—— placed on the table the candlestick with which he had lighted us. I told him to shut the door. As he turned to do so, a chair opposite to me moved from the wall quickly and noiselessly, and dropped itself about a yard from my own chair, immediately fronting it.

"Why, this is better than the turning-tables," said I, with a half-laugh; and as I laughed, my dog put back his head and howled.

F——, coming back, had not observed the movement of the chair. He employed himself now in stilling the dog. I continued to gaze on the chair, and fancied I saw on it a pale blue misty outline of a human figure, but an outline so indistinct that I could only distrust my own vision. The dog now was quiet.

"Put back that chair opposite to me," said I to F——; "put it back to the wall."

F—— obeyed. "Was that you, sir," said he, turning abruptly.

"I!—what?"

"Why, something struck me. I felt it sharply on the shoulder—just here."

"No," said I. "But we have jugglers present, and though we may not discover their tricks, we shall catch *them* before they frighten *us*."

We did not stay long in the drawing-rooms—in fact, they felt so damp and so chilly that I was glad to get to the fire upstairs. We locked the doors of the drawing-rooms—a precaution which, I should observe, we had taken with all the rooms we had searched below. The bedroom my servant had selected for me was the best on the floor—a large one, with two windows fronting the street. The four-posted bed, which took up no inconsiderable space, was opposite to the fire, which burnt clear and bright; a door in the wall to the left, between the bed and the window, commu-

nicated with the room which my servant appropriated to himself. This last was a small room with a sofa-bed, and had no communication with the landing-place—no other door but that which conducted to the bedroom I was to occupy. On either side of my fireplace was a cupboard, without locks, flush with the wall, and covered with the same dull-brown paper. We examined these cupboards—only hooks to suspend female dresses—nothing else; we sounded the walls—evidently solid—the outer walls of the building. Having finished the survey of these apartments, warmed myself a few moments, and lighted my cigar, I then, still accompanied by F——, went forth to complete my reconnoitre. In the landing-place there was another door; it was closed firmly. "Sir," said my servant, in surprise, "I unlocked this door with all the others when I first came; it cannot have got locked from the inside, for——"

Before he had finished his sentence, the door, which neither of us then was touching, opened quietly of itself. We looked at each other a single instant. The same thought seized both—some human agency might be detected here. I rushed in first, my servant followed. A small blank dreary room without furniture—a few empty boxes and hampers in a corner—a small window—the shutters closed—not even a fireplace—no other door but that by which we had entered—no carpet on the floor, and the floor seemed very old, uneven, worm-eaten, mended here and there, as was shown by the whiter patches on the wood; but no living being, and no visible place in which a living being could have hidden. As we stood gazing round, the door by which we had entered closed as quietly as it had before opened: we were imprisoned.

For the first time I felt a creep of undefinable horror. Not so my servant. "Why, they don't think to trap us, sir; I could break that trumpery door with a kick of my foot."

"Try first if it will open to your hand," said I, shaking off the vague apprehension that had seized me, "while I unclose the shutters and see what is without."

I unbarred the shutters—the window looked on the little back-yard I have before described; there was no ledge without—nothing to break the sheer descent of the wall. No man getting out of that window would have found any footing till he had fallen on the stones below.

F——, meanwhile, was vainly attempting to open the door. He now turned round to me and asked my permission to use force. And I should here state, in justice to the servant, that, far from evincing any superstitious terrors, his nerve, composure, and even gaiety amidst circumstances so extraordinary, compelled my admiration, and made me congratulate myself on having secured a companion in every way fitted to the occasion. I willingly gave him the permission he required. But though he was a remarkably strong man, his force was as idle as his milder efforts; the door did not even shake to his stoutest kick. Breathless and panting, he desisted. I then tried the door myself, equally in vain. As I ceased from the effort, again that creep of horror came over me; but this time it was more cold and stubborn. I felt as if some strange and ghastly exhalation were rising up from the chinks of that rugged floor, and filling the atmosphere with a venomous influence hostile to human life. The door now very slowly and quietly opened as of its own accord. We precipitated ourselves into the landing-place. We both saw a large pale light—as large as the human figure, but shapeless and unsubstantial—move before us, and ascend the stairs that led from the landing into the attics. I followed the light, and my servant followed me. It entered to the right of the landing, a small garret, of which the door stood open. I entered in the same instant. The light then collapsed into a small globule, exceedingly brilliant and vivid: rested a moment on a bed in the corner, quivered, and vanished. We approached the bed and examined it—a half-tester, such as is commonly found in attics devoted to servants. On the drawers that stood near it we perceived an old faded silk kerchief, with the needle still left in a rent half re-

paired. The kerchief was covered with dust; probably it had belonged to the old woman who had last died in that house, and this might have been her sleeping room. I had sufficient curiosity to open the drawers: there were a few odds and ends of female dress, and two letters tied round with a narrow ribbon of faded yellow. I took the liberty to possess myself of the letters. We found nothing else in the room worth noticing—nor did the light reappear; but we distinctly heard, as we turned to go, a pattering footfall on the floor—just before us. We went through the other attics (in all four), the footfall still preceding us. Nothing to be seen—nothing but the footfall heard. I had the letters in my hand: just as I was descending the stairs I distinctly felt my wrist seized, and a faint soft effort made to draw the letters from my clasp. I only held them the more tightly, and the effort ceased.

We regained the bed-chamber appropriated to myself, and I then remarked that my dog had not followed us when we had left it. He was thrusting himself close to the fire, and trembling. I was impatient to examine the letters; and while I read them, my servant opened a little box in which he had deposited the weapons I had ordered him to bring; took them out, placed them on a table close at my bed-head, and then occupied himself in soothing the dog, who, however, seemed to heed him very little.

The letters were short—they were dated; the dates exactly thirty-five years ago. They were evidently from a lover to his mistress, or a husband to some young wife. Not only the terms of expression, but a distinct reference to a former voyage, indicated the writer to have been a seafarer. The spelling and handwriting were those of a man imperfectly educated, but still the language itself was forcible. In the expressions of endearment there was a kind of rough wild love; but here and there were dark unintelligible hints at some secret not of love—some secret that seemed of crime. "We ought to love each other," was one of the sentences I remember, "for how every one else

would execrate us if all was known." Again: "Don't let any one be in the same room with you at night—you talk in your sleep." And again. "What's done can't be undone; and I tell you there's nothing against us unless the dead could come to life." Here there was underlined in a better handwriting (a female's), "They do!" At the end of the letter latest in date the same female hand had written these words: "Lost at sea the 4th of June, the same day as ——."

I put down the letters, and began to muse over their contents.

Fearing, however, that the train of thought into which I fell might unsteady my nerves, I fully determined to keep my mind in a fit state to cope with whatever of marvellous the advancing night might bring forth. I roused myself—laid the letters on the table—stirred up the fire, which was still bright and cheering, and opened my volume of Macaulay. I read quietly enough till about half-past eleven. I then threw myself dressed upon the bed, and told my servant he might retire to his own room, but must keep himself awake. I bade him leave open the door between the two rooms. Thus alone, I kept two candles burning on the table by my bed-head. I placed my watch beside the weapons, and calmly resumed my Macaulay. Opposite to me the fire burned clear; and on the hearth-rug, seemingly asleep, lay the dog. In about twenty minutes I felt an exceedingly cold air pass by my cheek, like a sudden draught. I fancied the door to my right, communicating with the landing-place, must have got open; but no—it was closed. I then turned my glance to my left, and saw the flame of the candles violently swayed as by a wind. At the same moment the watch beside the revolver softly slid from the table—softly, softly—no visible hand—it was gone. I sprang up, seizing the revolver with the one hand, the dagger with the other: I was not willing that my weapons should share the fate of the watch. Thus armed, I looked round the floor—no sign of the watch. Three slow, loud, distinct

knocks were now heard at the bed-head; my servant called out, "Is that you, sir?"

"No; be on your guard."

The dog now roused himself and sat on his haunches, his ears moving quickly backwards and forwards. He kept his eyes fixed on me with a look so strange that he concentred all my attention on himself. Slowly, he rose up, all his hair bristling, and stood perfectly rigid, and with the same wild stare. I had no time, however, to examine the dog. Presently my servant emerged from his room; and if ever I saw horror in the human face, it was then. I should not have recognised him had we met in the street, so altered was every lineament. He passed by me quickly, saying in a whisper that seemed scarcely to come from his lips, "Run—run! it is after me!" He gained the door to the landing, pulled it open, and rushed forth. I followed him into the landing involuntarily, calling him to stop; but, without heeding me, he bounded down the stairs, clinging to the balusters, and taking several steps at a time. I heard, where I stood, the street-door open—heard it again clap to. I was left alone in the haunted house.

It was but for a moment that I remained undecided whether or not to follow my servant; pride and curiosity alike forbade so dastardly a flight. I re-entered my room, closing the door after me, and proceeded cautiously into the interior chamber. I encountered nothing to justify my servant's terror. I again carefully examined the walls, to see if there were any concealed door. I could find no trace of one—not even a seam in the dull-brown paper with which the room was hung. How, then, had the THING, whatever it was, which had so scared him, obtained ingress except through my own chamber?

I returned to my room, shut and locked the door that opened upon the interior one, and stood on the hearth, expectant and prepared. I now perceived that the dog had slunk into an angle of the wall, and was pressing himself close against it, as if literally striving to force his way into

it. I approached the animal and spoke to it; the poor brute was evidently beside itself with terror. It showed all its teeth, the slaver dropping from its jaws, and would certainly have bitten me if I had touched it. It did not seem to recognise me. Whoever has seen at the Zoological Gardens a rabbit, fascinated by a serpent, cowering in a corner, may form some idea of the anguish which the dog exhibited. Finding all efforts to soothe the animal in vain, and fearing that his bite might be as venomous in that state as in the madness of hydrophobia, I left him alone, placed my weapons on the table beside the fire, seated myself, and recommenced my Macaulay.

Perhaps, in order not to appear seeking credit for a courage, or rather a coolness which the reader may conceive I exaggerate, I may be pardoned if I pause to indulge in one or two egotistical remarks.

As I hold presence of mind, or what is called courage, to be precisely proportioned to familiarity with the circumstances that lead to it, so I should say that I had been long sufficiently familiar with all experiments that appertain to the Marvellous. I had witnessed many very extraordinary phenomena in various parts of the world—phenomena that would be either totally disbelieved if I stated them, or ascribed to supernatural agencies. Now, my theory is that the Supernatural is the Impossible, and that what is called supernatural is only a something in the laws of nature of which we have been hitherto ignorant. Therefore, if a ghost rise before me, I have not the right to say, "So, then, the supernatural is possible," but rather, "So, then, the apparition of a ghost is, contrary to received opinion, within the laws of nature—*i.e.*, not supernatural."

Now, in all that I had hitherto witnessed, and indeed in all the wonders which the amateurs of mystery in our age record as facts, a material living agency is always required. On the Continent you will find still magicians who assert that they can raise spirits. Assume for the moment that they assert truly, still the living material form of the magi-

cian is present; and he is the material agency by which, from some constitutional peculiarities, certain strange phenomena are represented to your natural senses.

Accept, again, as truthful, the tales of Spirit Manifestation in America—musical or other sounds—writings on paper, produced by no discernible hand—articles of furniture moved without apparent human agency—or the actual sight and touch of hands, to which no bodies seem to belong—still there must be found the MEDIUM or living being, with constitutional peculiarities capable of obtaining these signs. In fine, in all such marvels, supposing even that there is no imposture, there must be a human being like ourselves by whom, or through whom, the effects presented to human beings are produced. It is so with the now familiar phenomena of mesmerism or electro-biology; the mind of the person operated on is affected through a material living agent. Nor, supposing it true that a mesmerised patient can respond to the will or passes of a mesmeriser a hundred miles distant, is the response less occasioned by a material being; it may be through a material fluid—call it Electric, call it Odic, call it what you will—which has the power of traversing space and passing obstacles, that the material effect is communicated from one to the other. Hence all that I had hitherto witnessed, or expected to witness, in this strange house, I believed to be occasioned through some agency or medium as mortal as myself; and this idea necessarily prevented the awe with which those who regard as supernatural things that are not within the ordinary operations of nature, might have been impressed by the adventures of that memorable night.

As, then, it was my conjecture that all that was presented, or would be presented to my senses, must originate in some human being gifted by constitution with the power so to present them, and having some motive so to do, I felt an interest in my theory which, in its way, was rather philosophical than superstitious. And I can sincerely say that I was in as tranquil a temper for observation as any practi-

cal experimentalist could be in awaiting the effects of some rare, though perhaps perilous, chemical combination. Of course, the more I kept my mind detached from fancy, the more the temper fitted for observation would be obtained; and I therefore riveted eye and thought on the strong daylight sense in the page of my Macaulay.

I now became aware that something interposed between the page and the light—the page was overshadowed: I looked up, and I saw what I shall find it very difficult, perhaps impossible to describe.

It was a Darkness shaping itself forth from the air in very undefined outline. I cannot say it was of a human form, and yet it had more resemblance to a human form, or rather shadow, than to anything else. As it stood, wholly apart and distinct from the air and the light around it, its dimensions seemed gigantic, the summit nearly touching the ceiling. While I gazed, a feeling of intense cold seized me. An iceberg before me could not more have chilled me; nor could the cold of an iceberg have been more purely physical. I feel convinced that it was not the cold caused by fear. As I continued to gaze, I thought—but this I cannot say with precision—that I distinguished two eyes looking down on me from the height. One moment I fancied that I distinguished them clearly, the next they seemed gone; but still two rays of a pale-blue light frequently shot through the darkness, as from the height on which I half believed, half doubted, that I had encountered the eyes.

I strove to speak—my voice utterly failed me; I could only think to myself, "Is this fear? it is *not* fear!" I strove to rise—in vain; I felt as if weighed down by an irresistible force Indeed, my impression was that of an immense and overwhelming Power opposed to my volition;—that sense of utter inadequacy to cope with a force beyond man's, which one may feel *physically* in a storm at sea, in a conflagration, or when confronting some terrible wild beast, or rather, perhaps, the shark of the ocean, I felt

morally. Opposed to my will was another will, as far superior to its strength as storm, fire, and shark are superior in material force to the force of man.

And now, as this impression grew on me—now came, at last, horror—horror to a degree that no words can convey. Still I retained pride, if not courage; and in my own mind I said, "This is horror, but it is not fear; unless I fear I cannot be harmed; my reason rejects this thing; it is an illusion—I do not fear." With a violent effort I succeeded at last in stretching out my hand towards the weapon on the table: as I did so, on the arm and shoulder I received a strange shock, and my arm fell to my side powerless. And now, to add to my horror, the light began slowly to wane from the candles—they were not, as it were, extinguished, but their flame seemed very gradually withdrawn: it was the same with the fire—the light was extracted from the fuel; in a few minutes the room was in utter darkness. The dread that came over me, to be thus in the dark with that dark Thing, whose power was so intensely felt, brought a reaction of nerve. In fact, terror had reached that climax, that either my senses must have deserted me, or I must have burst through the spell. I did burst through it. I found voice, though the voice was a shriek. I remember that I broke forth with words like these: "I do not fear, my soul does not fear;" and at the same time I found strength to rise. Still in that profound gloom I rushed to one of the windows—tore aside the curtain—flung open the shutters; my first thought was—LIGHT. And when I saw the moon high, clear, and calm, I felt a joy that almost compensated for the previous terror. There was the moon, there was also the light from the gas-lamps in the deserted slumberous street. I turned to look back into the room; the moon penetrated its shadow very palely and partially—but still there was light. The dark Thing, whatever it might be, was gone—except that I could yet see a dim shadow, which seemed the shadow of that shade, against the opposite wall.

My eye now rested on the table, and from under the table (which was without cloth or cover—an old mahogany round table) there rose a hand, visible as far as the wrist. It was a hand, seemingly, as much of flesh and blood as my own, but the hand of an aged person—lean, wrinkled, small too—a woman's hand. That hand very softly closed on the two letters that lay on the table: hand and letters both vanished. There then came the same three loud measured knocks I had heard at the bed-head before this extraordinary drama had commenced.

As those sounds slowly ceased, I felt the whole room vibrate sensibly; and at the far end there rose, as from the floor, sparks or globules like bubbles of light, many-coloured—green, yellow, fire-red, azure. Up and down, to and fro, hither, thither, as tiny Will-o'-the-Wisps, the sparks moved, slow or swift, each at its own caprice. A chair (as in the drawing-room below) was now advanced from the wall without apparent agency, and placed at the opposite side of the table. Suddenly, as forth from the chair, there grew a shape—a woman's shape. It was distinct as a shape of life—ghastly as a shape of death. The face was that of youth, with a strange mournful beauty; the throat and shoulders were bare, the rest of the form in a loose robe of cloudy white. It began sleeking its long yellow hair, which fell over its shoulders; its eyes were not turned towards me, but to the door; it seemed listening, watching, waiting. The shadow of the shade in the background grew darker; and again I thought I beheld the eyes gleaming out from the summit of the shadow—eyes fixed upon that shape.

As if from the door, though it did not open, there grew out another shape, equally distinct, equally ghastly—a man's shape—a young man's. It was in the dress of the last century, or rather in a likeness of such dress (for both the male shape and the female, though defined, were evidently unsubstantial, impalpable—simulacra—phantasms); and there was something incongruous, grotesque, yet fear-

ful, in the contrast between the elaborate finery, the courtly precision of that old-fashioned garb, with its ruffles and lace and buckles, and the corpse-like aspect and ghost-like stillness of the flitting wearer. Just as the male shape approached the female, the dark Shadow started from the wall, all three for a moment wrapped in darkness. When the pale light returned, the two phantoms were as if in the grasp of the Shadow that towered between them; and there was a blood-stain on the breast of the female; and the phantom male was leaning on its phantom sword, and blood seemed trickling fast from the ruffles, from the lace; and the darkness of the intermediate Shadow swallowed them up—they were gone. And again the bubbles of light shot, and sailed, and undulated, growing thicker and thicker and more wildly confused in their movements.

The closet door to the right of the fireplace now opened, and from the aperture there came the form of an aged woman. In her hand she held letters,—the very letters over which I had seen *the* Hand close; and behind her I heard a footstep. She turned round as if to listen, and then she opened the letters and seemed to read; and over her shoulder I saw a livid face, the face as of a man long drowned—bloated, bleached—seaweed tangled in its dripping hair; and at her feet lay a form as of a corpse, and beside the corpse there cowered a child, a miserable squalid child, with famine in its cheeks and fear in its eyes. And as I looked in the old woman's face, the wrinkles and lines vanished, and it became a face of youth—hard-eyed, stony, but still youth; and the Shadow darted forth, and darkened over these phantoms as it had darkened over the last.

Nothing now was left but the Shadow, and on that my eyes were intently fixed, till again eyes grew out of the Shadow—malignant, serpent eyes. And the bubbles of light again rose and fell, and in their disordered, irregular, turbulent maze, mingled with the wan moonlight. And now from these globules themselves, as from the shell of an egg, monstrous things burst out; the air grew filled

with them; larvæ so bloodless and so hideous that I can in no way describe them except to remind the reader of the swarming life which the solar microscope brings before his eyes in a drop of water—things transparent, supple, agile, chasing each other, devouring each other—forms like nought ever beheld by the naked eye. As the shapes were without symmetry, so their movements were without order. In their very vagrancies there was no sport; they came round me and round, thicker and faster and swifter, swarming over my head, crawling over my right arm, which was outstretched in involuntary command against all evil beings. Sometimes I felt myself touched, but not by them; invisible hands touched me. Once I felt the clutch as of cold soft fingers at my throat. I was still equally conscious that if I gave way to fear I should be in bodily peril; and I concentred all my faculties in the single focus of resisting, stubborn will. And I turned my sight from the Shadow—above all, from those strange serpent eyes—eyes that had now become distinctly visible. For there, though in nought else around me, I was aware that there was a WILL, and a will of intense, creative, working evil, which might crush down my own.

The pale atmosphere in the room began now to redden as if in the air of some near conflagration. The larvæ grew lurid as things that live in fire. Again the room vibrated; again were heard the three measured knocks; and again all things were swallowed up in the darkness of the dark Shadow, as if out of that darkness all had come, into that darkness all returned.

As the gloom receded, the Shadow was wholly gone. Slowly, as it had been withdrawn, the flame grew again into the candles on the table, again into the fuel in the grate. The whole room came once more calmly, healthfully into sight.

The two doors were still closed, the door communicating with the servant's room still locked. In the corner of the wall, into which he had so convulsively niched himself, lay

the dog. I called to him—no movement; I approached—the animal was dead; his eyes protruded; his tongue out of his mouth; the froth gathered round his jaws. I took him in my arms; I brought him to the fire; I felt acute grief for the loss of my poor favourite—acute self-reproach; I accused myself of his death; I imagined he had died of fright. But what was my surprise on finding that his neck was actually broken. Had this been done in the dark?—must it not have been by a hand human as mine?—must there not have been a human agency all the while in that room? Good cause to suspect it. I cannot tell. I cannot do more than state the fact fairly; the reader may draw his own inference.

Another surprising circumstance—my watch was restored to the table from which it had been so mysteriously withdrawn; but it had stopped at the very moment it was so withdrawn; nor, despite all the skill of the watchmaker, has it ever gone since—that is, it will go in a strange erratic way for a few hours, and then come to a dead stop—it is worthless.

Nothing more chanced for the rest of the night. Nor, indeed, had I long to wait before the dawn broke. Nor till it was broad daylight did I quit the haunted house. Before I did so, I revisited the little blind room in which my servant and myself had been for a time imprisoned. I had a strong impression—for which I could not account—that from that room had originated the mechanism of the phenomena—if I may use the term—which had been experienced in my chamber. And though I entered it now in the clear day, with the sun peering through the filmy window, I still felt, as I stood on its floors, the creep of the horror which I had first there experienced the night before, and which had been so aggravated by what had passed in my own chamber. I could not, indeed, bear to stay more than half a minute within those walls. I descended the stairs, and again I heard the footfall before me; and when I opened the street door, I thought I could distinguish a very low

laugh. I gained my own home, expecting to find my runaway servant there. But he had not presented himself, nor did I hear more of him for three days, when I received a letter from him, dated from Liverpool to this effect:

"HONOURED SIR:—I humbly entreat your pardon, though I can scarcely hope that you will think that I deserve it, unless—which Heaven forbid!—you saw what I did. I feel that it will be years before I can recover myself; and as to being fit for service, it is out of the question. I am therefore going to my brother-in-law at Melbourne. The ship sails to-morrow. Perhaps the long voyage may set me up. I do nothing now but start and tremble, and fancy IT is behind me. I humbly beg you, honoured sir, to order my clothes, and whatever wages are due to me, to be sent to my mother's, at Walworth—John knows her address."

The letter ended with additional apologies, somewhat incoherent, and explanatory details as to effects that had been under the writer's charge.

This flight may perhaps warrant a suspicion that the man wished to go to Australia, and had been somehow or other fraudulently mixed up with the events of the night. I say nothing in refutation of that conjecture; rather, I suggest it as one that would seem to many persons the most probable solution of improbable occurrences. My belief in my own theory remained unshaken. I returned in the evening to the house, to bring away in a hack cab the things I had left there, with my poor dog's body. In this task I was not disturbed, nor did any incident worth note befall me, except that still, on ascending and descending the stairs, I heard the same footfall in advance. On leaving the house, I went to Mr. J——'s. He was at home. I returned him the keys, told him that my curiosity was sufficiently gratified, and was about to relate quickly what had passed, when he stopped me, and said, though with

much politeness, that he had no longer any interest in a mystery which none had ever solved.

I determined at least to tell him of the two letters I had read, as well as of the extraordinary manner in which they had disappeared, and I then inquired if he thought they had been addressed to the woman who had died in the house, and if there were anything in her early history which could possibly confirm the dark suspicions to which the letters gave rise. Mr. J—— seemed startled, and, after musing a few moments, answered: "I am but little acquainted with the woman's earlier history, except, as I before told you, that her family were known to mine. But you revive some vague reminiscences to her prejudice. I will make inquiries, and inform you of their result. Still, even if we could admit the popular superstition that a person who had been either the perpetrator or the victim of dark crimes in life could revisit, as a restless spirit, the scene in which those crimes had been committed, I should observe that the house was infested by strange sights and sounds before the old woman died—you smile—what would you say?"

"I would say this, that I am convinced, if we could get to the bottom of these mysteries, we should find a living human agency."

"What! you believe it is all an imposture? for what object?"

"Not an imposture in the ordinary sense of the word. If suddenly I were to sink into a deep sleep, from which you could not awake me, but in that sleep could answer questions with an accuracy which I could not pretend to when awake—tell you what money you had in your pocket—nay, describe your very thoughts—it is not necessarily an imposture, any more than it is necessarily supernatural. I should be, unconsciously to myself, under a mesmeric influence, conveyed to me from a distance by a human being who had acquired power over me by previous *rapport*."

"But if a mesmeriser could so affect another living being,

can you suppose that a mesmeriser could also affect inanimate objects: move chairs—open and shut doors?"

"Or impress our senses with the belief in such effects—we never having been *en rapport* with the person acting on us? No. What is commonly called mesmerism could not do this; but there may be a power akin to mesmerism and superior to it—the power that in the old days was called Magic. That such a power may extend to all inanimate objects of matter, I do not say; but if so, it would not be against nature—it would only be a rare power in nature which might be given to constitutions with certain peculiarities, and cultivated by practice to an extraordinary degree. That such a power might extend over the dead—that is, over certain thoughts and memories that the dead may still retain—and compel, not that which ought properly to be called the SOUL, and which is far beyond human reach, but rather a phantom of what has been most earth-stained on earth to make itself apparent to our senses—is a very ancient though obsolete theory, upon which I will hazard no opinion. But I do not conceive the power would be supernatural. Let me illustrate what I mean from an experiment which Paracelsus describes as not difficult, and which the author of the *Curiosities of Literature* cites as credible: A flower perishes; you burn it. Whatever were the elements of that flower while it lived are gone, dispersed, you know not whither; you can never discover nor re-collect them. But you can, by chemistry, out of the burnt dust of that flower, raise a spectrum of the flower, just as it seemed in life. It may be the same with the human being. The soul has as much escaped you as the essence or elements of the flower. Still you may make a spectrum of it. And this phantom, though in the popular superstition it is held to be the soul of the departed, must not be confounded with the true soul; it is but the eidolon of the dead form. Hence, like the best attested stories of ghosts or spirits, the thing that most strikes us is the absence of what we hold to be the soul; that is, of superior

emancipated intelligence. These apparitions come for little or no object—they seldom speak when they do come; if they speak, they utter no ideas above those of an ordinary person on earth. American spirit-seers have published volumes of communications, in prose and verse, which they assert to be given in the names of the most illustrious dead —Shakespeare, Bacon—heaven knows whom. Those communications, taking the best, are certainly not a whit of higher order than would be communications from living persons of fair talent and education; they are wondrously inferior to what Bacon, Shakespeare, and Plato said and wrote when on earth. Nor, what is more noticeable, do they ever contain an idea that was not on the earth before. Wonderful, therefore, as such phenomena may be (granting them to be truthful), I see much that philosophy may question, nothing that it is incumbent on philosophy to deny—viz., nothing supernatural. They are but ideas conveyed somehow or other (we have not yet discovered the means) from one mortal brain to another. Whether, in so doing, tables walk of their own accord, or fiendlike shapes appear in a magic circle, or bodyless hands rise and remove material objects, or a Thing of Darkness, such as presented itself to me, freeze our blood—still am I persuaded that these are but agencies conveyed, as by electric wires, to my own brain from the brain of another. In some constitutions there is a natural chemistry, and those constitutions may produce chemic wonders—in others a natural fluid, call it electricity, and these may produce electric wonders. But the wonders differ from Normal Science in this—they are alike objectless, purposeless, puerile, frivolous. They lead on to no grand results; and therefore the world does not heed, and true sages have not cultivated them. But sure I am, that of all I saw or heard, a man, human as myself, was the remote originator; and I believe unconsciously to himself as to the exact effects produced, for this reason: no two persons, you say, have ever told you that they experienced exactly the same thing. Well, observe, no two persons ever ex-

perience exactly the same dream. If this were an ordinary imposture, the machinery would be arranged for results that would but little vary; if it were a supernatural agency permitted by the Almighty, it would surely be for some definite end. These phenomena belong to neither class; my persuasion is that they originate in some brain now far distant; that that brain had no distinct volition in anything that occurred; that what does occur reflects but its devious, motley, ever-shifting, half-formed thoughts; in short, that it has been but the dreams of such a brain put into action and invested with a semi-substance. That this brain is of immense power, that it can set matter into movement, that it is malignant and destructive, I believe; some material force must have killed my dog; the same force might, for aught I know, have sufficed to kill myself, had I been as subjugated by terror as the dog—had my intellect or my spirit given me no countervailing resistance in my will."

"It killed your dog! that is fearful! indeed it is strange that no animal can be induced to stay in that house; not even a cat. Rats and mice are never found in it."

"The instincts of the brute creation detect influences deadly to their existence. Man's reason has a sense less subtle, because it has a resisting power more supreme. But enough; do you comprehend my theory?"

"Yes, though imperfectly—and I accept any crotchet (pardon the word), however odd, rather than embrace at once the notion of ghosts and hobgoblins we imbibed in our nurseries. Still, to my unfortunate house the evil is the same. What on earth can I do with the house?"

"I will tell you what I would do. I am convinced from my own internal feelings that the small unfurnished room at right angles to the door of the bedroom which I occupied forms a starting-point or receptacle for the influences which haunt the house; and I strongly advise you to have the walls opened, the floor removed—nay, the whole room pulled down. I observe that it is detached from the body

of the house, built over the small back-yard, and could be removed without injury to the rest of the building."

"And you think, if I did that——"

"You would cut off the telegraph wires. Try it. I am so persuaded that I am right, that I will pay half the expense if you will allow me to direct the operations."

"Nay, I am well able to afford the cost; for the rest, allow me to write to you."

About ten days after I received a letter from Mr. J——, telling me that he had visited the house since I had seen him; that he had found the two letters I had described, replaced in the drawer from which I had taken them; that he had read them with misgivings like my own; that he had instituted a cautious inquiry about the woman to whom I rightly conjectured they had been written. It seemed that thirty-six years ago (a year before the date of the letters) she had married, against the wish of her relations, an American of very suspicious character; in fact, he was generally believed to have been a pirate. She herself was the daughter of very respectable tradespeople, and had served in the capacity of a nursery governess before her marriage. She had a brother, a widower, who was considered wealthy, and who had one child of about six years old. A month after the marriage, the body of this brother was found in the Thames, near London Bridge; there seemed some marks of violence about his throat, but they were not deemed sufficient to warrant the inquest in any other verdict than that of "found drowned."

The American and his wife took charge of the little boy, the deceased brother having by his will left his sister the guardian of his only child—and in event of the child's death, the sister inherited. The child died about six months afterwards—it was supposed to have been neglected and ill-treated. The neighbours deposed to have heard it shriek at night. The surgeon who had examined it after death said that it was emaciated as if from want of nourishment, and the body was covered with livid bruises. It

seemed that one winter night the child had sought to escape —crept out into the back-yard—tried to scale the wall—fallen back exhausted, and been found at morning on the stones in a dying state. But though there was some evidence of cruelty, there was none of murder; and the aunt and her husband had sought to palliate cruelty by alleging the exceeding stubbornness and perversity of the child, who was declared to be half-witted. Be that as it may, at the orphan's death the aunt inherited her brother's fortune. Before the first wedded year was out, the American quitted England abruptly, and never returned to it. He obtained a cruising vessel, which was lost in the Atlantic two years afterwards. The widow was left in affluence: but reverses of various kinds had befallen her: a bank broke—an investment failed—she went into a small business and became insolvent—then she entered into service, sinking lower and lower, from housekeeper down to maid-of-all-work—never long retaining a place, though nothing decided against her character was ever alleged. She was considered sober, honest, and peculiarly quiet in her ways; still nothing prospered with her. And so she had dropped into the workhouse, from which Mr. J—— had taken her, to be placed in charge of the very house which she had rented as mistress in the first year of her wedded life.

Mr. J—— added that he had passed an hour alone in the unfurnished room which I had urged him to destroy, and that his impressions of dread while there were so great, though he had neither heard nor seen anything, that he was eager to have the walls bared and the floors removed as I had suggested. He had engaged persons for the work, and would commence any day I would name.

The day was accordingly fixed. I repaired to the haunted house—we went into the blind dreary room, took up the skirting, and then the floors. Under the rafters, covered with rubbish, was found a trap-door, quite large enough to admit a man. It was closely nailed down, with clamps and rivets of iron. On removing these we de-

scended into a room below, the existence of which had never been suspected. In this room there had been a window and a flue, but they had been bricked over, evidently for many years. By the help of candles we examined this place; it still retained some mouldering furniture—three chairs, an oak settle, a table—all of the fashion of about eighty years ago. There was a chest of drawers against the wall, in which we found, half-rotted away, old-fashioned articles of a man's dress, such as might have been worn eighty or a hundred years ago by a gentleman of some rank—costly steel buckles and buttons, like those yet worn in court-dresses, a handsome court sword—in a waistcoat which had once been rich with gold-lace, but which was now blackened and foul with damp, we found five guineas, a few silver coins, and an ivory ticket, probably for some place of entertainment long since passed away. But our main discovery was in a kind of iron safe fixed to the wall, the lock of which it cost us much trouble to get picked.

In this safe were three shelves, and two small drawers. Ranged on the shelves were several small bottles of crystal, hermetically stopped. They contained colourless volatile essences, of the nature of which I shall only say that they were not poisons—phosphor and ammonia entered into some of them. There were also some very curious glass tubes, and a small pointed rod of iron, with a large lump of rock-crystal, and another of amber—also a loadstone of great power.

In one of the drawers we found a miniature portrait set in gold, and retaining the freshness of its colours most remarkably, considering the length of time it had probably been there. The portrait was that of a man who might be somewhat advanced in middle life, perhaps forty-seven or forty-eight.

It was a remarkable face—a most impressive face. If you could fancy some mighty serpent transformed into man, preserving in the human lineaments the old serpent type, you would have a better idea of that countenance than long

descriptions can convey: the width and flatness of frontal —the tapering elegance of contour disguising the strength of the deadly jaw—the long, large, terrible eye, glittering and green as the emerald—and withal a certain ruthless calm, as if from the consciousness of an immense power.

Mechanically I turned round the miniature to examine the back of it, and on the back was engraved a pentacle; in the middle of the pentacle a ladder, and the third step of the ladder was formed by the date 1765. Examining still more minutely, I detected a spring; this, on being pressed, opened the back of the miniature as a lid. Within-side the lid were engraved, "Marianna to thee—Be faithful in life and in death to ——." Here follows a name that I will not mention, but it was not unfamiliar to me. I had heard it spoken of by old men in my childhood as the name borne by a dazzling charlatan who had made a great sensation in London for a year or so, and had fled the country on the charge of a double murder within his own house—that of his mistress and his rival. I said nothing of this to Mr. J——, to whom reluctantly I resigned the miniature.

We had found no difficulty in opening the first drawer within the iron safe; we found great difficulty in opening the second: it was not locked, but it resisted all efforts, till we inserted in the chinks the edge of a chisel. When we had thus drawn it forth, we found a very singular apparatus in the nicest order. Upon a small thin book, or rather tablet, was placed a saucer of crystal; this saucer was filled with a clear liquid—on that liquid floated a kind of compass, with a needle shifting rapidly round; but instead of the usual points of a compass were seven strange characters, not very unlike those used by astrologers to denote the planets. A peculiar, but not strong nor displeasing odour, came from this drawer, which was lined with a wood that we afterwards discovered to be hazel. Whatever the cause of this odour, it produced a material effect on the nerves. We all felt it, even the two workmen who were in the room —a creeping tingling sensation from the tips of the fingers

to the roots of the hair. Impatient to examine the tablet, I removed the saucer. As I did so the needle of the compass went round and round with exceeding swiftness, and I felt a shock that ran through my whole frame, so that I dropped the saucer on the floor. The liquid was spilt—the saucer was broken—the compass rolled to the end of the room—and at that instant the walls shook to and fro, as if a giant had swayed and rocked them.

The two workmen were so frightened that they ran up the ladder by which we had descended from the trap-door; but seeing that nothing more happened, they were easily induced to return.

Meanwhile I had opened the tablet: it was bound in plain red leather, with a silver clasp; it contained but one sheet of thick vellum, and on that sheet were inscribed, within a double pentacle, words in old monkish Latin, which are literally to be translated thus: "On all that it can reach within these walls—sentient or inanimate, living or dead—as moves the needle, so work my will! Accursed be the house, and restless be the dwellers therein."

We found no more. Mr. J—— burnt the tablet and its anathema. He razed to the foundations the part of the building containing the secret room with the chamber over it. He had then the courage to inhabit the house himself for a month, and a quieter, better-conditioned house could not be found in all London. Subsequently he let it to advantage, and his tenant has made no complaints.

THE END.

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